

CHUCK GRASSLEY MUST THINK THE FD-1023 INFORMANT IS WORTH KILLING OFF

In their panic to do something to stave off the Hunter Biden guilty plea next week – and perhaps to bail Gary Shapley and Joseph Ziegler (who are represented by lawyers tied to Chuck Grassley) out of wild and in some cases inconsistent claims they made in their House Oversight debut – Grassley and James Comer have released the FD-1023 form on which they've hung their latest conspiracy theories about an attempt to bribe Joe Biden.

They've released it with almost no redactions, so it will be very easy for anyone who came in contact with the FBI informant whose interview it recorded – an international businessman – to reverse engineer who he is.

Virtually anyone bound by the principles of physics, by time and space, who has looked at the FD-1023 closely has recognized that the allegation in the report does not match known reality.

Lev Parnas swears it didn't happen. In this Twitter thread, Thomas Fine calls the report, the Science Fiction Double Feature Bribery Scheme. ABC provided multiple ways the allegations conflict with reality and even notes that Chuck Grassley waged war on the exploitation of such unvetted intelligence with Christopher Steele. Phil Bump last month described how James Comer was spinning his wheels (and the press) but couldn't find any substance to it; he even noted Ron Johnson's admission that he couldn't substantiate a key claim in it.

The most interesting thing, to me, is that FBI agents working with then-Pittsburgh US Attorney Scott Brady, the partisan Republican whom Barr

put in charge of ingesting Rudy's Russian disinformation, didn't ask, or record, on what date in 2019, a meeting in London addressing an entirely different topic took place at which Oleksandr Ostapenko placed a call to Mykola Zlochevsky so Zlochevsky could provide to the informant very specific numbers of recordings he had involving Hunter Biden and his father.

2019 Telephone Call. After the aforementioned 2016 telephone call, CHS had no interactions with Zlochevsky/Burisma whatsoever, until 2019. In 2019, CHS met with Ostapenko in London to discuss various business matters (which had nothing to do with Zlochevsky, Burisma, or the gas/oil industry; CHS noted that CHS's meeting with Ostapenko took place at a "Russian coffee house near Knightsbridge Street located near Harrods department store," and that Ostapenko's fiancé lives in London). At some point during this meeting, Ostapenko advised CHS he was going to call Zlochevsky. At this time, CHS understood Zlochevsky was living somewhere in Europe (NFI). During the call, Zlochevsky asked CHS and/or Ostapenko if they read the recent news reports about the investigations into the Bidens and Burisma, and Zlochevsky jokingly asked CHS if CHS was an "oracle" (due to CHS's prior advice that Zlochevsky should not pay the Bidens and instead to hire an attorney to litigate the allegations concerning Shokin's investigation). CHS mentioned Zlochevsky might have difficulty explaining suspicious wire transfers that may evidence any (illicit) payments to the Bidens. Zlochevsky responded he did not send any funds directly to the "Big Guy" (which CHS understood was a reference to Joe Biden). CHS asked Zlochevsky how many companies/bank accounts Zlochevsky controls; Zlochevsky responded it would take them (investigators) 10 years to find the records (i.e. illicit payments to Joe Biden). CHS told Zlochevsky if he ever needed help in the future and wanted to speak to somebody in the US government about that matter, that CHS could introduce him to someone.

Brady's team didn't get (or record) this date even after a follow-up conversation three days after the original meeting with the informant, even though it would have been the freshest memory for the informant and fairly easy to pinpoint given travel records. They identified with some specificity at which coffee house the meeting with Ostapenko happened (possibly this place), but not the date.

That's not how the FBI works.

But given the informant's reference to "recent news reports about the investigations into the Bidens and Burisma," it is likely the meeting happened during the impeachment investigation, possibly even after Rudy Giuliani met with soon-to-be-sanctioned Russian agent Andrii Derkach in December 2019.

If the meeting came after mid-February, "Hunter Biden's" "laptop" was already being packaged up for a later political hit job. If the meeting came after October 9, 2019, which is when Parnas' visibility onto these matters ended because he was arrested but Rudy was not, then it might reflect what happened to the plan to meet Burisma's CFO and Dmitry Firtash in Vienna to obtain a copy of "Hunter Biden's" "laptop" after his arrest. It could be possible, after all, that Zlochevsky had said one thing to Parnas earlier in 2019 and another thing after

Victoria Toensing had met with Bill Barr.

There's something else that debunks the story: that Chuck Grassley apparently cares so little about substantiating it he's willing to risk the life of the informant.

Both ABC and this weaker CNN report describe that the FBI warned releasing this could get the informant killed. The Messenger provides more detail on the various warnings the FBI gave Congress about protecting this information (contrary to its claim, this is not an exclusive; WaPo's Jacqueline Alemany and Politico's Jordain Carney both posted one of these letters on Twitter, but don't appear to have written it up).

FBI officials cautioned lawmakers on several occasions about the dangers that releasing the document could pose to confidential informants and others, according to materials obtained by The Messenger.

"We have repeatedly explained to you, in correspondence and in briefings, how critical it is to keep this information confidential," the FBI said in a June 9 letter, obtained by The Messenger, to the Democratic ranking member and chairman of the House Oversight Committee, Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., who has been scrutinizing the Biden family.

"We are concerned that Members disregarded the Committee's agreement that information from the document should not be further disclosed," the FBI said in the letter, which came one day after lawmakers on the Oversight Committee were permitted to view the document in a secured room.

Other documents obtained by The Messenger show that the FBI's warnings not to release the confidential information extended back to May – before Comer and others were allowed to

view the FBI form.

The FBI told lawmakers that protecting the secrecy of the FBI form is “critical” to the “physical safety” of the source and others, according to a May 30 letter sent to Comer.

[snip]

Members of Congress were also provided with a warning that the information contained in the document “should be treated confidentially,” before they viewed the form on June 8, saying the agency “expressly does not consent” to the release of the material.

The FBI also raised concerns that lawmakers were taking notes in the meeting, which was prohibited, according to the letter.

Grassley and Comer released this FD-1023 – in almost unredacted form – after FBI warned, multiple times, of the danger of doing so.

This, to my mind, is the biggest tell of this stunt.

If you want to fuel a controversy, you release the FD-1023, even at the risk of getting the informant killed or, at the very least, burning his value as an informant permanently. If you want to pursue the allegation, you do everything you can to protect the FD-1023 and the informant.

Especially given David Weiss’ notice to Lindsey Graham that there is an ongoing investigation into matters pertaining to the FD-1023.

Your questions about allegations contained in an FBI FD-1023 Form relate to an ongoing investigation. As such, I cannot comment on them at this time.

Unless, of course, the GOP is so desperate to

kill that investigation that they'd be willing to get the informant behind it killed as well.

Update: Federalist Faceplant Margot, who occasionally gets fed disinformation from Bill Barr, says a source has told her the FBI verified that the human source traveled where he had claimed he had traveled at the times he said he had.

Following the late June 2020 interview with the CHS, the Pittsburgh FBI office obtained travel records for the CHS, and those records confirmed the CHS had traveled to the locales detailed in the FD-1023 during the relevant time period. The trips included a late 2015 or early 2016 visit to Kiev, Ukraine; a trip a couple of months later to Vienna, Austria; and travel to London in 2019.

She's really one of the few people stupid enough to report this as news. After all, the FBI corroborated that Igor Danchenko traveled to Moscow when he said he had, too. All that meant was that he was in Moscow being fed disinformation when he said he was.

The same is especially likely here because, if the FBI had actual dates for the 2019 trip to London – as Faceplant Margot says they did – then it raises still more questions why they didn't include the date.

Unless the date would have given up the game by making it clear it happened after Rudy's made further deals for disinformation.