

THE “WAITING FOR MUELLER” MISTAKE AND THE RIGHT WING BUBBLE

Simon Rosenberg didn't panic about a 2022 Red Wave. As analysts everywhere were wailing that the Sky Was Falling, he was quietly confident.

Keep that in mind as you listen to this conversation he had with Greg Sargent. I have about the same cautious optimism as Rosenberg (I was less confident than he was in 2022) on this year's election, but he's a pro who works from fundamentals, not just last week's poll results.

Among other things, he talks about how any of six big negatives for Trump could blow the election for him:

1. He raped E. Jean Carroll in a department store dressing room
2. He oversaw one of the largest frauds in America history and that he and Rudy Giuliani through all their various misdeeds own over \$700M dollars
3. He stole American secrets, lied to the FBI about it, and shared these secrets with other people
4. He led an insurrection against the United States
5. He and his family have corruptly taken billions from foreign governments
6. He is singularly responsible

for ending Roe and stripping
the rights and freedoms away
from more than half the
population

I would add two more: First, Trump routinely defrauds MAGA supporters. Over the last week, he turned the RNC into a means to do so on a grander scale. Republicans need to hear that they're being taken to the cleaners by Trump – and by Steve Bannon, whose trial for doing so will also serve as backdrop to this election season.

More tellingly, Rosenberg addressed this detail when he described how Biden's two big negatives have resolved (my biggest complaint about this interview is it didn't address Gaza, the unmentioned third), not when he addressed Trump's scandals.

The Biden crime family story, we just learned in the last few weeks, was a Russian op that was being laundered by the Republican party that blew up in their face.

Rosenberg treated the manufactured "Biden crime family" that was actually a Russian op laundered by the GOP as a resolved Biden negative *after* he made this point, the most important in the interview, in my opinion.

We have to learn the lesson from waiting for Mueller. Waiting for Mueller was a mistake by the Democratic Party. It prevented us from prosecuting the case against Trump and his illicit relationship with the Russian government that was out there all for us to see. Right? The Russians played a major role in his election in 2016. This is not in dispute in any way. And so I think now what we need to do is not wait for Jack Smith or wait for Merrick Garland. We need to use what's in front of us and

prosecute this in ways that we know is going to do enormous harm.

No superhero will come tell any one of these stories for Democrats. Trump's opponents have to tell the story of Trump's corruption. They cannot wait for Mueller. Or Jack Smith.

One of many reasons I'm so focused on the Hunter Biden story is that it is actually what proves the continuity of that story of Russian influence that Democrats failed to tell. Trump asks for Russian help in 2016 and gets it. As part of a campaign in which Rudy Giuliani solicited Russian spies for dirt on Hunter Biden, Trump withheld security support from Ukraine to get the same. *Even after that*, Trump's DOJ created a way to launder the dirt Rudy collected from known Russian spies to use in the 2020 election. That campaign created the shiny object that has created the "Biden crime family" narrative. Like Russia's role in the 2016 election, none of this is in dispute. It's just not known.

You cannot wait for Robert Mueller or Jack Smith to tell this narrative. But for four months this entire story – this arc – has passed largely unnoticed, even as Trump took steps to deliver Ukraine's bleeding corpse to his liege, Vladimir Putin.

Those who want to defeat Trump – and honestly, Republicans like Liz Cheney and Amanda Carpenter have been doing a better job of this than most Democrats – have to make sure this story gets told.

This is what I've been trying to say over and over and over. The *reason* why the moderate press hasn't been telling the story of Trump's role in the insurrection, of his ties to militia members and his direct inspiration for the most brutal assaults on cops on January 6 is because all their TV lawyers have been whinging instead about their own misunderstanding of the January 6 investigation. They haven't been telling the

story of what we know.

They have been complaining that Merrick Garland hasn't compromised the investigation to tell them more, turning Garland into their villain, not Trump.

In the few minutes after I posted these comments on Twitter, commenters have:

- Complained that the full Mueller Report hasn't been released, when really they've simply been too lazy to understand that the most damning bits have been released.
- Bitched that Merrick Garland hired Rob Hur, rather than bitching about Rob Hur telling a narrative even after his own investigation had debunked it.
- Complained about a delay in the January 6 investigation that didn't happen.

Kaitlan Collins' interview with Brian Butler, a former Trump employee whose testimony badly incriminated his one-time best friend, Carlos De Oliveira, has been drowned out by all the complaints.

The story barely made a blip. It's not just the NYT that buries important Trump stories under complaints about Biden, it's Democratic supporters.

Rosenberg went on to describe how Democrats need to improve this. He noted that the Right Wing noise machine provides them a great advantage on this front, one that Biden will have to spend to combat.

We have to recognize, Greg, that the information environment in the United States is really broken right now and that the power of the Right Wing noise machine to bully and intimidate mainstream media into being complicit in advancing some of their narratives is something that needs a campaign that has half a billion dollars in it to be able to draw even on. What we've learned is there is a structural imbalance in the information game between the two parties, that the Republicans have a significant advantage over us in a day-to-day information war.

This is true. But the insularity of the Right Wing noise machine can be made into a weakness for Republicans, even before spending the money. Because right wingers so rarely try to perform for a mainstream audience, as soon as they do – whether it is rising star Katie Britt or Kentucky redneck James Comer – they look like lying morons.

And in the face of that Right Wing noise, Democrats need to be disciplined.

The Biden campaign's going to have to be wildly disciplined. They can't chase the daily story. They're going to have to pick the two or three things they know from research are the things that are a rubicon with the electorate.

[snip]

It's going to be incumbent upon them to not allow the Trumpian mania and madness sort of push them around every day. They're going to need to develop an offensive strategy both on what we're selling and on what we're indicting him with.

Rosenberg laid out the six bullets; I added two more. Trump will try to distract from that with

daily outrages, with spectacle.

Trump – abetted by social media – will try to distract from that argument by demeaning all ability to make, or understand, coherent arguments.

I'm less sanguine than Rosenberg that even discipline is enough to overcome Trump's circus. Therein lies the challenge.

But he's right that those who want to defeat Trump have to make that case themselves. Neither Jack Smith, nor the NYT, will save you.