

WAPO GIVES BILL BARR PLATFORM TO ATTACK JOE BIDEN WITHOUT MENTIONING BARR'S ROLE IN FRAMING BIDEN

WaPo wrote a story on Bill Barr's statement on Fox News that he would support Trump over Biden because Biden would represent a "continuation of the Biden administration is national suicide."

On Wednesday, Barr maintained that voting for Trump would still be "Russian roulette" but claimed that a "continuation of the Biden administration is national suicide, in my opinion."

Nothing in this story is news. It was always clear Barr was going to vote against Democrats, whom he decries (though the article notes that last July, he claimed to not know).

Much of the story simply regurgitates Barr's own propaganda about how he is a "vocal critic" of Trump, without mentioning that before he criticized Trump's Big Lie, Barr kicked it off, by attacking mail-in ballots. It doesn't mention that the same people, Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell, whose election lawyering Barr attacked, Barr protected and enabled as Attorney General, shielding Rudy from any legal consequences for soliciting campaign dirt from known Russian spies, and helping Sidney Powell attempt to reverse the prosecution of Mike Flynn.

Crazier still, it makes no mention – none! – of the side channel Barr set up to funnel that dirt Rudy obtained from known Russian spies.

As I've reported repeatedly, in January 2020, Bill Barr ordered Scott Brady to conduct a side review of the dirt Rudy Giuliani collected from

Russian spies and others. Via still unexplained circumstances, that side channel resulted in a claim from Alexander Smirnov being shared first with Brady, and then with Hunter Biden prosecutor David Weiss, a claim that Joe Biden had accepted a bribe from Burisma. After having received the lead in 2020 and not pursued it, Weiss revisited it after Barr made public comments last summer, as Republicans in Congress were chasing the claim.

That push to review what is now known as the Smirnov allegation resulted in David Weiss reneging on the plea deal he made with Hunter Biden and chasing the Smirnov allegation, only to discover Smirnov made it all up.

WaPo knows these details. A long piece on Smirnov described the side channel, though did not mention that Brady claimed to have verified precisely the travel details that Weiss alleges debunk Smirnov's claims.

In October 2023, several months after Grassley's release, Scott Brady, the former U.S. attorney for the western district of Pennsylvania, appeared before the GOP-controlled House Judiciary Committee to answer questions about the claims. Brady, who did not respond to a request for comment, had been tasked in 2020 by then-Attorney General William P. Barr to review information about Biden gathered in Ukraine by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani.

Brady characterized the bribery claims as not thoroughly vetted as of 2020. At the same time, he told the committee that it was "correct" that the FBI considered that person credible at the time of the allegations.

And a piece from Devlin Barrett, listed as a contributor to this story, wrote a piece that obscured rather than highlighted the insanity behind Weiss' decision to renege on the scope of

the plea deal he made with Hunter to chase Smirnov's allegations anew (Devlin did not mention Barr's role in pitching the allegation in both 2020 and 2023).

Smirnov's account was passed along to investigators in Delaware who were involved in the Hunter Biden investigation – a move which years later led to the charges against Smirnov, these people said.

U.S. authorities said that when agents questioned Smirnov again in 2023, he repeated some past lies, changed other parts of his story and offered new falsehoods after claiming to have met with Russian officials.

Bill Barr's decision to set up a side channel to funnel dirt collected by Donald Trump's lawyer on Trump's opponent's son to prosecutors already investigating Hunter Biden led directly to Joe Biden being framed. And it remains unexplained how Scott Brady came to find the lead – or whether it has anything to do with DOJ's reported closure of an investigation into Mykola Zlochevsky in this same period.

At this point, Barr's role in setting up a side channel that led to Biden being framed ought to be included in all discussions of his animus to Biden or his decision to back Trump. All the more so given that Jerry Nadler referred Scott Brady to at least DOJ IG for investigation of the way he misled Congress about his vetting corroborating Smirnov's claims. After all, such an investigation may lead to places that scrutinize Barr's own actions.

Sure Barr is going to back Republicans over Joe Biden, the guy he helped frame. But if the investigation into *how* that side channel ended up framing Biden gets very far, Barr may have far more self-interested reasons in ending Democratic control of DOJ.