

MANUFACTURED HORSESHIT: PAUL MANAFORT RETURNS TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Vaughn Hillyard caught Paul Manafort in a victory lap on the floor of the RNC the other day.

Hillyard: Mr. Manafort, how is it to be back?

Manafort It's great to be back.

And so it is that eight years after getting advance warning of the DNC release from his long time buddy Roger Stone, almost eight years after Stone emailed Manafort telling him he had a way to win the race, and just short of eight years after Manafort met with Konstantin Kilimnik in a cigar bar and discussed the outlines of a quid pro quo: campaign information for debt relief in exchange for a commitment to carve up Ukraine (Manafort insists he rejected the plan to carve up Ukraine, though the plan nevertheless remained active until at least 2018).

Aside from Hillyard and Robert Costa's tweets marking Manafort's arrival, his presence made barely a blip in the news coverage.

Why should it?

Among all the other criminals and insurrectionists, Manafort no longer sticks out.

And with JD Vance's selection as VP, Manafort's support for a pro-Russian Ukraine also looks banal, rather than alarming.

But there is likely a backstory few want to pursue.

Back in May, when Paul Manafort's return was first reported and then denied, 24sight described how (as he had done in 2016), Paulie had been and kept working the back channel.

Manafort has quietly been passing strategic advice back to Trump through co-campaign manager Chris LaCivita and longtime Trump pollster Tony Fabrizio, the Republican sources said. Manafort has been analyzing polling results and advised on the organization of state Republican parties and selecting delegates to the Republican nominating convention – one of his specialties – according to two Republicans familiar with the dealings.

But LaCivita and other Trump campaign officials vehemently denied Manafort's involvement.

LaCivita called questions about huddling with Manafort for Trump's benefit "manufactured horseshit," in a text message to 24sight News. Trump campaign spokesman Brian Hughes endorsed LaCivita's reply, adding some context to the pushback.

"There was clearly a moment of consideration about using Manafort specifically for the convention," Hughes said Wednesday. "But Manafort very publicly withdrew himself."

Asked if Manafort had discussions with Fabrizio about helping steer the campaign, Hughes said he was unaware of everything that people talk about outside the campaign.

Three Republicans familiar with the dealings said that LaCivita met with Manafort in suburban Washington last fall. LaCivita denied details of the meeting to 24sight News, but declined to answer additional questions.

LaCivita was denying Manafort's centrality as vigorously as he is now attempting to deny the (Orbán-aligned) Project 2025, as vigorously as Steve Bannon denied Manafort's ongoing role in 2016, in spite of receiving plans on how to secure the victory, plans which led Bannon to worry about the appearance of Russian involvement in the victory.

But all these pieces go together.

That is, Trump is running not just as someone who explicitly wants to be a Dictator from Day One, someone who supports all the same policies as a Project that targets divorce and birth control along with the very idea of civil service.

He is running with Russian help on a plan to give Russia what it wants, starting, but not ending, with Ukraine on a silver platter.

Trump, and the guy Trump pardoned for lying about what happened with Russia in 2016, are simply picking up where things left off.