



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on October 30, 2017

## Manafort Indicted for Charges That Predate Trump Campaign

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation has drawn blood. One-time Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort (shown) was indicted Monday on a list of charges including money laundering, tax evasion, conspiracy against the United States, and being an unregistered agent of a foreign government. His business partner, Rick Gates, was indicted, as well.



While the liberal establishment will certainly celebrate Manafort's indictment as a blow to President Trump, the reality is that all of the charges stem from events that happened years before the campaign and therefore have nothing to do with Trump. And before the liberal establishment puts champagne on ice, it would be good to remember that Hillary Clinton has recently found herself in the cross-hairs of investigations related to Russian collusion, as well.

The [indictment](#) of Manafort and Gates is pretty damning. Listing 12 counts, it opens:

Defendants PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR., and RICHARD W. GATES III (GATES) served for years as political consultants and lobbyists. Between at least 2006 and 2015, MANAFORT and GATES acted as unregistered agents of the Government of Ukraine, the Party of Regions (a Ukrainian political party whose leader Victor Yanukovich was President from 2010 to 2014), Yanukovich, and the Opposition Bloc (a successor to the Party of Regions that formed in 2014 when Yanukovich fled to Russia). MANAFORT and GATES generated tens of millions of dollars in income as a result of their Ukraine work. In order to hide Ukraine payments from United States authorities, from approximately 2006 through at least 2016, MANAFORT and GATES laundered the money through scores of United States and foreign corporations, partnerships, and bank accounts.

The indictment goes on to say that in "furtherance of the scheme" the two men "funneled millions of dollars in payments into foreign nominee companies and bank accounts" that were either "opened by them" or by "their accomplices," and that they "concealed from the United States their work as agents of, and millions of dollars in payments from, Ukraine and its political parties and leaders." The indictment alleges that they "directed a campaign to lobby United States officials on behalf of the Government of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine, and Ukrainian political parties" for which they not only did not "report to the United States their work and fees," but responded to inquiries from the Department of Justice "with a series of "false and misleading statements."

The indictment goes on for 31 pages and makes a compelling case that Paul Manafort and Rick Gates are criminals who sold out their patriotic allegiance for millions and millions in cold, hard cash. There



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are two points that should stand out in sharp contrast, though. (1) An indictment is not a conviction; it will be up to a jury to decide whether Manafort and Gates are guilty of the crimes for which they are accused. (2) Nothing in this indictment has *anything* to do with the original direction of the investigation; everything described in the indictment happened *before* Manafort was involved in the campaign. Even if every charge is proved and Manafort and Gates are convicted, it does not prove collusion between Trump and Russia.

For their parts, Manafort and Gates appeared in Federal District Court in Washington on Monday afternoon and pleaded “not guilty” to all charges.

It is not out of the ordinary for either a special counsel or a grand jury to issue indictments for crimes uncovered during an investigation even though those crimes are beyond the scope of the original investigation. So while Mueller’s lack of a statement to that effect is conspicuously absent, there is nothing improper in this indictment in and of itself.

That does not mean, however, that everything is necessarily above board with Mueller, his investigation, or this indictment.

Mueller was appointed special counsel in May and began investigating whether anyone close to President Trump participated in a Russian government effort to influence the 2016 presidential election. Of course, considering recent revelations about Russian collusion involving the Obama administration (in general) and Hillary Clinton (in particular), it is reasonable to question whether Mueller should be anywhere near this investigation, much less leading it. Mueller’s ties to ousted FBI Director James Comey and the fact that Mueller himself headed the FBI for more than four of Obama’s eight years should be more than enough to cast a doubt on Mueller’s ability (and perhaps even his willingness) to act independently and impartially as a special counsel investigating the people implicated in this — people to whom he has close connections. The political incest involved should make his resignation a forgone conclusion.

In a series of dramatic developments last week, [House Republicans announced new investigations into Clinton’s UraniumOne scandal](#) and [Comey’s protection of Clinton in her e-mail scandal](#), it was revealed that [Clinton and the DNC illegally hid the fact that they funded the creation of the fake dossier](#) that was used in an attempt to deligitimize Trump’s presidency, and [the Senate Intelligence Committee shifted the direction of its probe into Russian collusion to focus on Clinton and the DNC](#). And in the wake of those recent developments, Mueller’s office announces the indictments against Manafort and Gates.

How long will we have to wait for an indictment of the litany of transgressions committed by Clinton, Obama, and their many accomplices?

This is a developing story and *The New American* will keep our readers updated.

*Photo of Paul Manafort: AP Images*



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