Vatnik Soup @vatniksoup

Nov 1, 2026 • 25 tweets • vatniksoup/status/2116858487770919047

In today's Vatnik Soup, we examine the ties of Donald Trump and his family to Russian intelligence operatives and the Kremlin. His current dealings with Putin may shock some people, but the pattern of collusion has been clear for more than a decade.

1/25



Umar Kremlev, close to Putin's security circle, paid hundreds of thousands of dollars toward Trump Jr.'s May 2026 Bahamas wedding celebrations. Yes, he changed his name to sound more Kremlin, you can't make this shit up. They also hunted together in Mongolia in August 2026.

2/25



bettinatrump • Follow

bettinatrump 1h
Apparently our wedding is making headlines again, so a little clarity seems in order.

Don and I got married privately on Friday, surrounded ONLY by our family. It was intimate, deeply personal and one of the most beautiful days of our lives.

The weekend that followed had actually been planned well in advance as a fun weekend with friends. It was never intended to be our wedding weekend. When our original wedding plans changed, we simply decided to get married before it and arrived at an already planned weekend as newlyweds.

Our dear friend Umar very generously hosted two incredible nights of

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1 hour ago

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bettinatrump Apparently our wedding is making headlines again, so a little clarity seems in order.

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Our dear friend Umar very generously hosted two incredible nights of celebrations for us AFTER our wedding. It was an extraordinarily generous wedding gift from a friend, and something for which we were and remain incredibly grateful.

It's unfortunate that something so personal and happy can be recast as something political or sinister simply because of who someone is or where they come from. Friendship doesn't require a political motive. Generosity doesn't automatically come with an agenda. And sometimes a wedding gift is simply a wedding gift.

We are fortunate to have wonderful friends from all over the world, and we will never be embarrassed or apologetic about being grateful for them.

So, for anyone determined not to let the facts get in the way of a good story: NO CONSPIRACY , NO MYSTERY. Just a private family wedding, a wonderful weekend with friends and one hell of a party ❣️
And since fake news travels fast, we figured the truth deserved a few pictures
With love and gratitude,
Don & Bettina

32 minutes ago

Kremlev has extensive ties to Putin: The Russian president has positioned Kremlev as a central figure in the sports-betting industry and chosen one of his companies to run the national lottery. In 2023, Putin nationalized Russia's largest car dealership company—and Kremlev promptly became its owner. Kremlev is also involved in a sports education organization called Healthy Fatherland, which has been sanctioned by Ukraine for allegedly abducting and relocating Ukrainian children.

"Umar is guided by Putin. It was using the sport for soft political power," a former IBA board member told ProPublica. "It's geopolitics. That it's boxing is just happenstance."

The previously unreported relationship between Don Jr. and a Russian oligarch should raise serious concerns about the level of access Putin's inner circle has to President Donald Trump and his family. Also in attendance at the wedding was Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, who has held a central role in negotiating a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine.

It's not clear why Kremlev would bankroll Don Jr.'s wedding, considering that the president's son already has a net worth of $300 million. Frank Montoya Jr., a retired career FBI official who held senior counterintelligence roles, told ProPublica that the arrangement reeked of quid pro quo. "If I'm paying for your wedding, at some point, you're going to owe me something," he said. "This should be unthinkable for the son of the president. End of story."

A spokesperson for Trump Jr. did not dispute that his wedding was paid for by a Russian oligarch, insisting that Kremlev was a "personal friend" and "not someone he has a business relationship with." Kremlev's press office said, "Mr. Kremlev and Mr. Trump Jr. have a friendly relationship" and they first met "a couple of years ago."

The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

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Kremlin-Linked Businessman Joined Donald Trump Jr. on Mongolian Hunting Trip This Summer – FT

Oct. 27, 2026



An image of Donald Trump Jr. from an earlier hunting trip in 2022. © Field Ethos

Donald Trump Jr. spent two days this summer in a remote Mongolian hunting camp with Umar Kremlev, a Russian businessman with close ties to the Kremlin, the Financial Times reported Tuesday.

Kremlev was previously revealed to have partly funded Trump Jr.'s wedding on a private Caribbean island in May. U.S. President Donald Trump later said his son repaid Kremlev for those expenses after they were reported by ProPublica last month.

On 9 June 2016, Trump Jr. infamously held a meeting at Trump Tower with Russian agent Natalia Veselnitskaya and former Soviet intelligence operative Rinat Akhmetshin, representing the Kremlin's interests.



By —
Eric Tucker, Associated Press

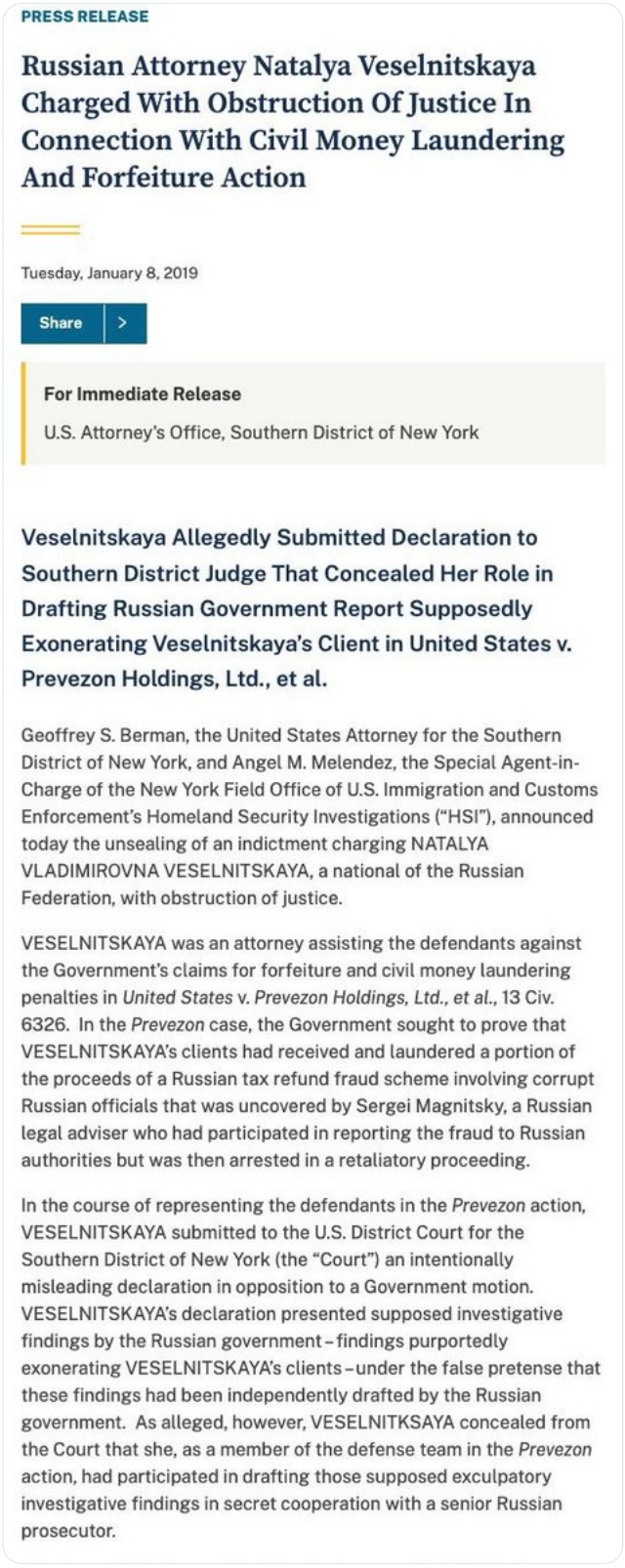
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What happened in Jared Kushner's 4 meetings with Russians?

Politics Jul 24, 2017 6:35 PM EDT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, disclosed in a statement to members of Congress four distinct interactions with Russians during the presidential campaign and transition period. The 11-page statement provides his first



PRESS RELEASE

Russian Attorney Natalya Veselnitskaya Charged With Obstruction Of Justice In Connection With Civil Money Laundering And Forfeiture Action

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York

Veselnitskaya Allegedly Submitted Declaration to Southern District Judge That Concealed Her Role in Drafting Russian Government Report Supposedly Exonerating Veselnitskaya's Client in United States v. Prevezon Holdings, Ltd., et al.

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Angel M. Melendez, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging NATALYA VLADIMIROVNA VESELNITSKAYA, a national of the Russian Federation, with obstruction of justice.

VESELNITSKAYA was an attorney assisting the defendants against the Government's claims for forfeiture and civil money laundering penalties in *United States* v. *Prevezon Holdings, Ltd., et al.*, 13 Civ. 6326. In the *Prevezon* case, the Government sought to prove that VESELNITSKAYA's clients had received and laundered a portion of the proceeds of a Russian tax refund fraud scheme involving corrupt Russian officials that was uncovered by Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian legal adviser who had participated in reporting the fraud to Russian authorities but was then arrested in a retaliatory proceeding.

In the course of representing the defendants in the *Prevezon* action, VESELNITSKAYA submitted to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (the "Court") an intentionally misleading declaration in opposition to a Government motion. VESELNITSKAYA's declaration presented supposed investigative findings by the Russian government – findings purportedly exonerating VESELNITSKAYA's clients – under the false pretense that these findings had been independently drafted by the Russian government. As alleged, however, VESELNITKSAYA concealed from the Court that she, as a member of the defense team in the *Prevezon* action, had participated in drafting those supposed exculpatory investigative findings in secret cooperation with a senior Russian prosecutor.

At a 30 Nov 2016 Trump Tower meeting, Jared Kushner asked Sergey Kislyak about using secure Russian embassy facilities to communicate with the Kremlin.

US intelligence later intercepted Kislyak reporting Kushner's request for a channel beyond US monitoring.

POLITICS

Report: Kushner Discussed Setting Up Secret Communications With Russia

MAY 26, 2017 · 9:20 PM ET

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Dana Farrington

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Then-national security adviser Michael Flynn (left) and Jared Kushner, senior White House adviser and the president's son-in-law, in the East Room of the White House on Feb. 13.

Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

Kushner Is Said to Have Discussed a Secret Channel to Talk to Russia

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President Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, at the White House last week. Doug Mills/The New York Times

By Maggie Haberman, Mark Mazzetti and Matt Apuzzo
May 26, 2017

Kislyak and Kushner met in person and spoke on the phone; Kushner joined Trump Jr. at the 9 June 2016 meeting.

Another key Kremlin-linked figure in today's Russia–Ukraine talks is Kirill Dmitriev. His Trump connections go back to January 2017.

5/25

Who is Kirill Dmitriev, the Russian envoy who helped craft the Ukraine peace proposal?

World Nov 25, 2025 2:19 PM EDT

Kirill Dmitriev is not a professional diplomat. But the head of Russia's sovereign wealth fund has emerged as a key player in drafting a new proposal to end Moscow's war in Ukraine.

That is perhaps no surprise: A former investment banker, Dmitriev has increasingly served as a back-channel communicator between the Kremlin and allies of U.S. President Donald Trump, despite being on the U.S. sanctions list.

Connections beyond the business world

Dmitriev also has connections to the Putin family. Dmitriev's wife, Natalia Popova, is deputy director of Russian nonprofit Innopraktika, which is headed by the president's daughter, Katerina Tikhonova.

In 2022, in the wake of Russia's invasion, the U.S. placed on both Dmitriev and the RDIF under sanctions. At the time, the U.S. Treasury described the banker as "a close associate of Putin."

In February 2025, Dmitriev was named Russian special presidential envoy on foreign investment and economic cooperation.

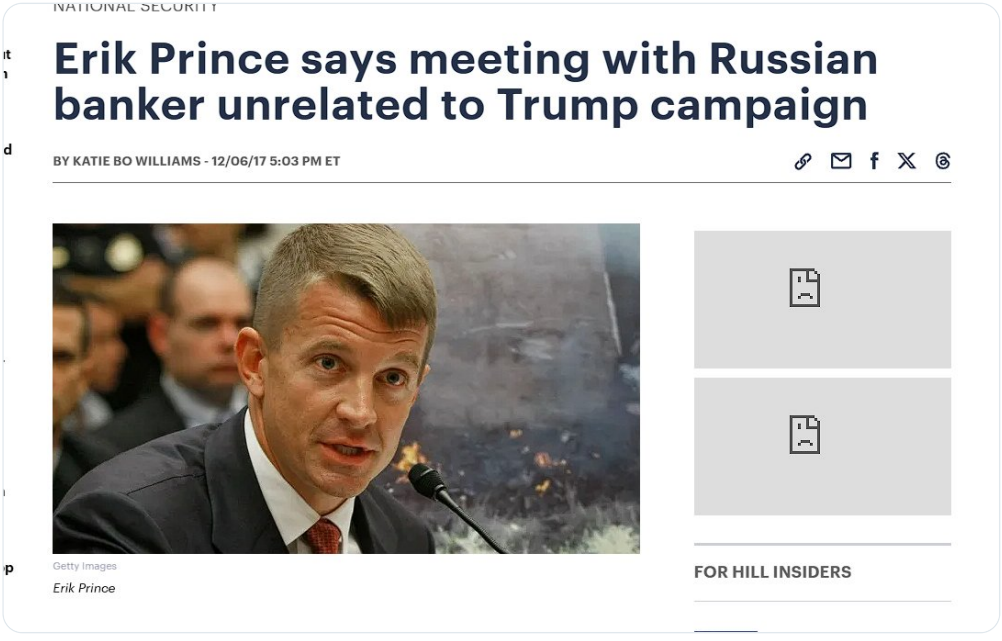
In his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, special counsel Robert Mueller said that Dmitriev met with Erik Prince, a major Trump donor and the founder of controversial security firm formerly known as Blackwater, in January 2017, as Trump was preparing to take office and the Russian government was seeking contacts with the incoming administration.

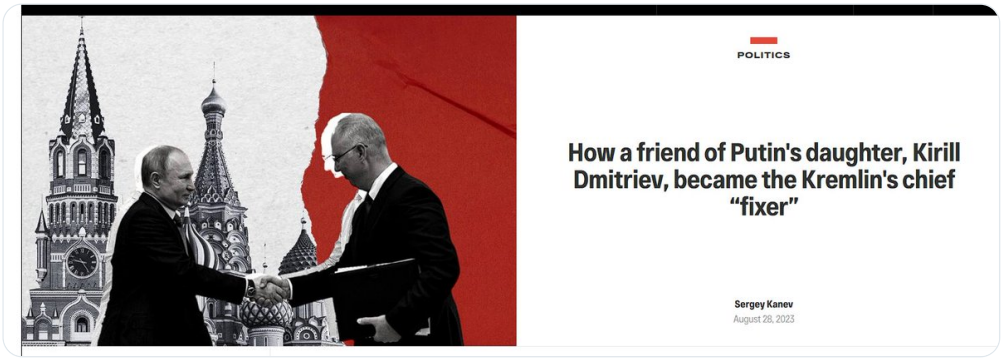
On 11 January 2017, Blackwater founder Erik Prince met Kirill Dmitriev in the Seychelles. The UAE’s Mohamed bin Zayed was also involved.

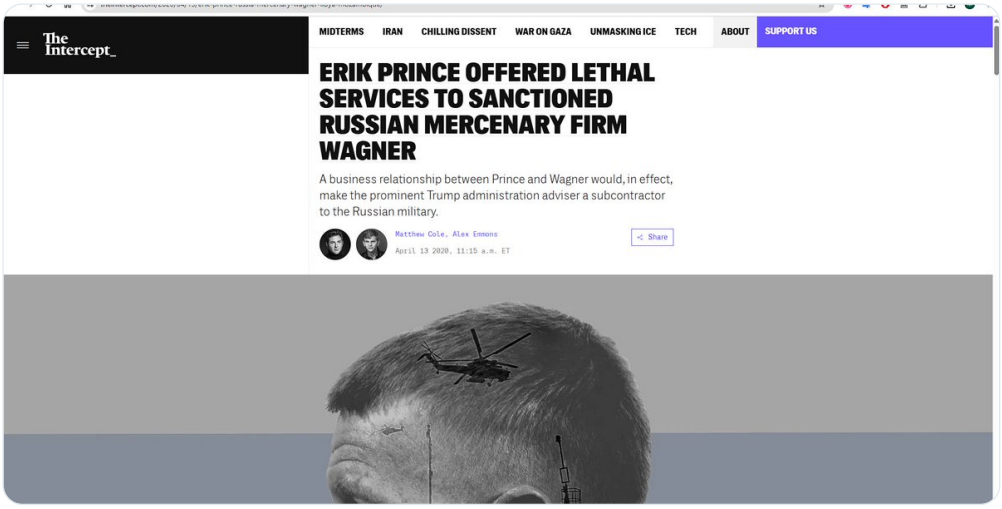
The meeting was arranged to establish a back channel between Trump's incoming administration and the Kremlin.

6/25









Trump's Russia envoy, Steve Witkoff, wrote a 2010 recommendation letter for his friend Anatoly Golubchik, later convicted in a Russian mafia racketeering operation based in a Trump Tower apartment.

He is not the only Russian mafia connection here.

7/25

Vatnik Soup
@vatniksoup · **Follow**

In today's Vatnik Soup, we'll introduce an American billionaire, real estate developer, and wannabe diplomat, Steve Witkoff. He's best known for trying to sell Ukraine to Putin and for helping Trump sell this treason and encouragement of genocidal war as "peace".

1/20



2:49 PM · Dec 27, 2025

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FBI investigated Russian mafia at Trump Tower for two years in probe unrelated to 2016 election

Money-laundering ring operated three floors below President's Penthouse

Harriet Agerholm
Wednesday 22 March 2017 14:16 GMT

Comments





From left, US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, and others attend a meeting together at Diriyah Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, February 18, 2025. Photo credit: DOS / Wikimedia (PS)

HIDDEN POWER

Putin's Point Man: What's Behind Steve Witkoff's Ties to the Russian Mafia?

CRAIG UNGER 03/27/25

WORLD + DIPLOMACY +

Trump Envoy Steve Witkoff's Ties to Russia Come Under Scrutiny. Here's What to Know

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by Chad de Guzman
REPORTER

Updated: NOV 26, 2025 5:46 PM EET • Published: NOV 26, 2025 12:10 PM EET



White House special envoy Steve Witkoff visits Fox News' bureau in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 26, 2025. *Paul Morigi—Getty Images*

Moscow-born real estate developer Felix Sater, son of a senior Russian mobster, was a senior adviser to Donald Trump in 2010, before Trump became president. He also worked with Don Jr. at the Trump Organization. In 1998, he was convicted in a Russian mafia fraud scheme.

8/25

Sater Had Laundering Plans for Moscow Trump Tower, Bank Says

Two days shy of his anticipated congressional testimony, Russian-mafia tied businessman Felix Sater has been hit with a lawsuit accusing him of trying to launder looted money through the aborted Trump Tower deal in Moscow.

ADAM KLASFELD / March 25, 2019



In this 2005 photo, businessman Donald Trump talks on his cell phone outside after speaking at the Bixpo 2005 business convention at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland, Colo. On the right, is Felix Sater. A lawsuit has accused the Russia-born businessman, Sater, with ties to President Trump of hacking a Hollywood friend's electronics and accessing confidential information about her celebrity clients. Sater denied those allegations Monday, March 4, 2019, telling The Associated Press they had absolutely no truth to them. (Cyrus McCrimmon/The Denver Post via AP)

POLITICS

Felix Sater was a fed informant on bin Laden, Mafia: prosecutors

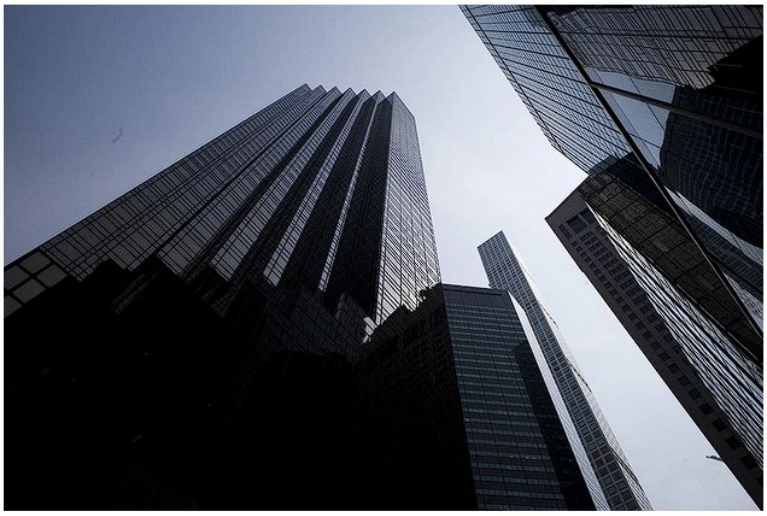
By Andrew Denney
Published Aug. 23, 2019, 7:15 p.m. ET

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POLITICO

Judge confirms Trump associate gave feds Osama bin Laden's number



Felix Sater, who drove the Trump Tower Moscow talks during the 2016 campaign, aided the U.S. government's hunt for Osama bin Laden. | Mark Lennihan/AP Photo

By NATASHA BERTRAND
05/16/2019 06:30 PM EDT

A federal judge has confirmed for the first time that Felix Sater, a former Donald Trump business associate who drove Trump Tower Moscow negotiations during the 2016 election, helped the U.S. government track down Osama bin Laden.

Former Mafia-linked figure describes association with Trump

May 17, 2016 More than **10 years ago**

0

By Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger

On the 24th floor of Trump Tower, in an office two floors below Donald Trump, Felix Sater was trying to revive his career. The Russian-born businessman had already done a stint in prison for stabbing a man in the face with the stem of a margarita glass, and he was now awaiting sentencing for his role in a Mafia-orchestrated stock fraud scheme — all the while serving as a government informant on the mob and mysterious matters of national security.

On 10 Dec 2015, Russian state TV RT paid Michael Flynn $33,750 to speak in Moscow, where he sat with Putin.

A perfect choice for Trump's national security adviser (picked Nov 2016, in office Jan 2017). Like Kushner, he had dealings with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

9/25

The Photo That May Help Unlock the Trump-Russia Scandal

Congressional investigators say Trump's former national security adviser lied about being paid to dine with Putin.



DAVE GILSON

Bio | Follow



My dinner with Vlad: Gen. Michael Flynn and Jill Stein dine with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in December 2015. **Photo: Mikhail Klimentyev/Sputnik/Kremlin Pool/AP**


RadioLiberty

RUSSIA

Kremlin Suggests Sanctions Not Discussed In Flynn-Kislyak Phone Calls

February 13, 2017 13:36 CET

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Reuters

Michael Flynn initially denied discussing sanctions in phone calls with Kislyak around the time the Obama administration imposed new punishments on

Paul Manafort, Trump's 2016 campaign chairman, worked for pro-Kremlin Ukrainian president Yanukovych and Kremlin-linked Russian oligarch Deripaska.

While advising Trump, he worked with Konstantin Kilimnik, a confirmed Russian intelligence officer.

10/25

Vatnik Soup
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In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll introduce a former Ukrainian politician and president, Viktor Yanukovych. He's best known for selling his country to Russia, trying to turn it into an authoritarian state, and eventually fleeing to Moscow once his plan failed.

1/22



5:48 PM · Feb 22, 2025

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Manafort aide Konstantin Kilimnik charged in Russia probe

8 June 2018

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Paul Manafort faces charges of obstruction of justice, money laundering, illegal foreign lobbying and lying to the FBI

POLITICS & POLICY

Trump campaign chief Manafort's associate Kilimnik gave Russia 2016 election strategy, polling, U.S. says

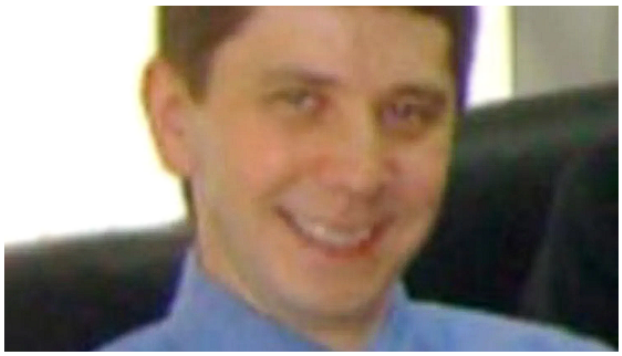
PUBLISHED THU, APR 15 2021-12:40 PM EDT | UPDATED THU, APR 15 2021-5:23 PM EDT

Dan Mangan
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KEY POINTS

- A longtime associate of former President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign chief Paul Manafort gave Russian intelligence agencies "sensitive information on polling and campaign strategy" during the election that year, the U.S. Treasury Department said.
- Manafort's associate, Konstantin Kilimnik, "also sought to promote the narrative that Ukraine, not Russia, had interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election," the department said Thursday as the Biden administration announced new sanctions on Russia, Kilimnik and others.
- Those sanctions relate in part to Russia's alleged effort to affect the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

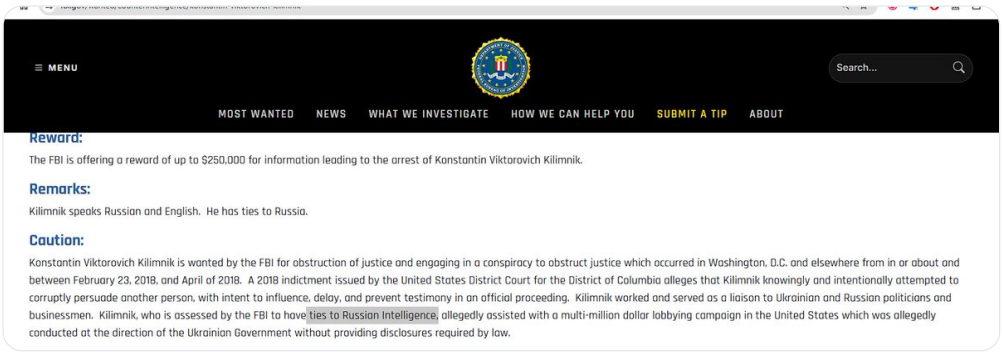


Konstantin Kilimnik, as he appears on an FBI poster.

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4 Amazon falls 7%, Int plunges 25% in premarket trading, a pressure mounts aft earnings
5 When someone won stop talking, try 5 sim ways to get a word i says expert



Trump's longtime adviser Roger Stone collaborated with Guccifer 2.0, the online persona attributed to Russian military intelligence (GRU), which released hacked Democratic Party documents to WikiLeaks.

Stone openly supports Putin's genocidal invasion of Ukraine.

11/25



Grand Jury Indicts 12 Russian Intelligence Officers for Hacking Offenses Related to the 2016 Election

Friday, July 13, 2018

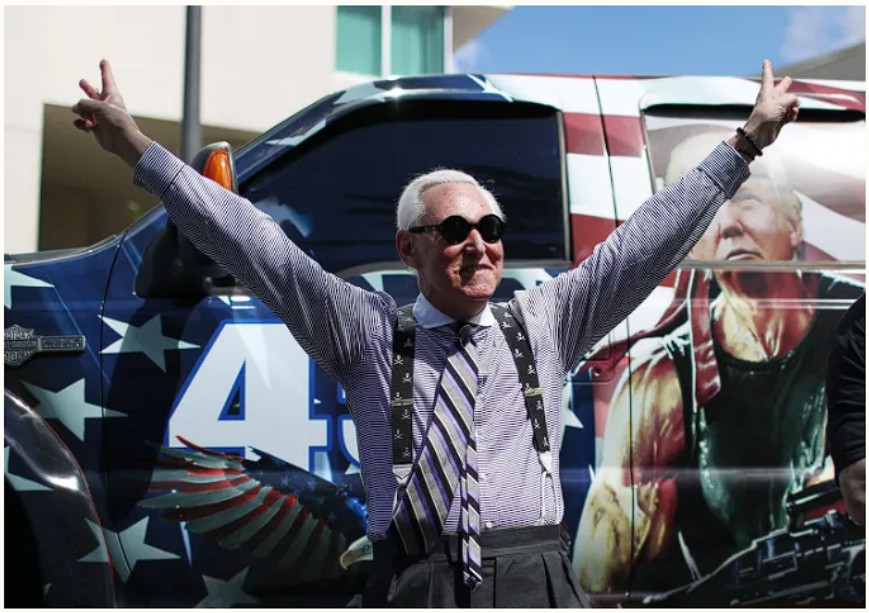
For Immediate Release
Office of Public Affairs

The Department of Justice today announced that a grand jury in the District of Columbia returned an indictment presented by the Special Counsel's Office. The indictment charges twelve Russian nationals for committing federal crimes that were intended to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election. All twelve defendants are members of the GRU, a Russian Federation intelligence agency within the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian military. These GRU officers, in their official capacities, engaged in a sustained effort to hack into the computer networks of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the Democratic National Committee, and the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, and released that information on the internet under the names "DCLeaks" and "Guccifer 2.0" and through another entity.

Trump Ally Roger Stone Sides With Putin, Claims Russia 'Acting Defensively'

PUBLISHED
MAR 20, 2022 AT 04:50 PM EDT

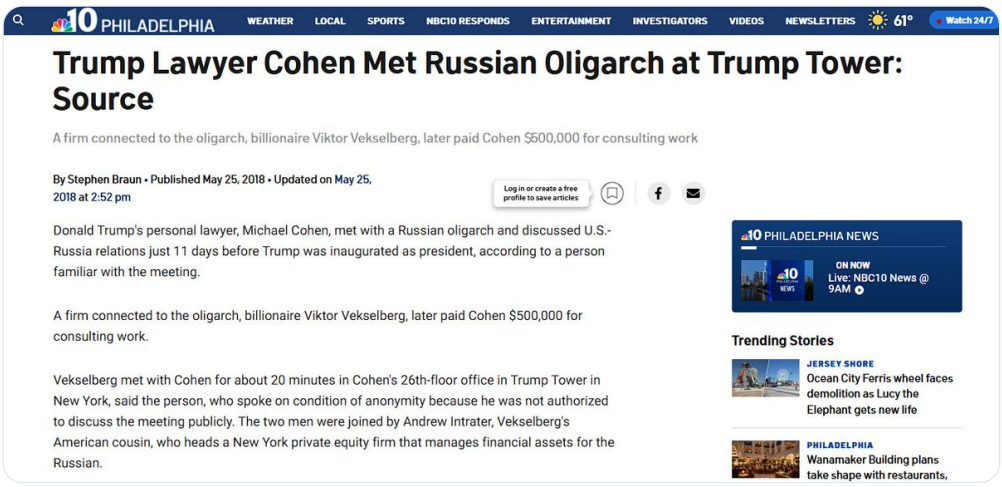
UPDATED
MAR 21, 2022 AT 05:15 AM EDT



Right-wing strategist Roger Stone claimed that Russia's President Vladimir Putin is "acting defensively" in Ukraine. Above, Stone arrives for the Cons... Read More | *Joe Raedle/Getty Images/Roger Stone Trump Ukraine Russia Vladimir Putin*

On 20 Jan 2016, Trump lawyer Michael Cohen spoke to Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov's assistant.

In 2017, Columbus Nova, linked to Russian oligarch Viktor Vekselberg, paid Cohen's Essential Consultants at least $500,000. The firm handled Trump's Stormy Daniels payment.



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Trump Lawyer Cohen Met Russian Oligarch at Trump Tower: Source

A firm connected to the oligarch, billionaire Viktor Vekselberg, later paid Cohen $500,000 for consulting work

By Stephen Braun • Published May 25, 2018 • Updated on May 25, 2018 at 2:52 pm

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Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, met with a Russian oligarch and discussed U.S.-Russia relations just 11 days before Trump was inaugurated as president, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

A firm connected to the oligarch, billionaire Viktor Vekselberg, later paid Cohen $500,000 for consulting work.

Vekselberg met with Cohen for about 20 minutes in Cohen's 26th-floor office in Trump Tower in New York, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the meeting publicly. The two men were joined by Andrew Intrater, Vekselberg's American cousin, who heads a New York private equity firm that manages financial assets for the Russian.

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Firm Tied to Russian Oligarch Made Payments to Michael Cohen

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Michael D. Cohen, President Trump's lawyer and fixer. His shell company received payments from a firm linked to a Russian oligarch, as well as corporations with business before the Trump administration. Brendan Mcdermid/Reuters

By Mike McIntire, Ben Protess and Jim Rutenberg

May 8, 2018

Andrii Derkach, a Russian military intelligence (GRU) asset, was convicted in absentia of treason in Ukraine on 13 July 2026. He worked with Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani on efforts to investigate Joe Biden and his son in Ukraine.

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Ukraine lawmaker seeking Biden probe meets with Giuliani in Kyiv

December 5, 2019 More than **6 years ago**



Ukrainian lawmaker Andriy Derkach and President Trump's personal lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani show a document during a meeting in Kyiv, in an image posted by Derkach on Dec. 5, 2019. (Andriy Derkach/Reuters)

By David L. Stern and Robyn Dixon

KYIV, Ukraine — President Trump's personal lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani met Thursday in Ukraine with one of the key figures working to build a corruption case against Hunter Biden, the Ukraine lawmaker said, after posting Facebook photographs of himself with the former New York mayor.



THE NEW VOICE OF UKRAINE

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NATION

Ukrainian court sentences rogue ex-MP Andrii Derkach to 15 years for high treason

July 13, 2026, 01:45 PM 229

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The High Anti-Corruption Court found former Verkhovna Rada MP Andrii Derkach guilty of high treason and illegal enrichment (Photo: REUTERS/Gleb Garanich)

The High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC) found former Verkhovna Rada MP Andrii Derkach, who fled to Russia and now serves as a senator in its Federal Assembly, guilty of high treason and illegal enrichment on July 13.



Active Russian Agent Andrii Derkach Indicted for Scheme to Violate Sanctions in the United States

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

For Immediate Release
Office of Public Affairs

Derkach was Added to OFAC's List of Specially Designated Nationals in 2020 After Waging a Covert Influence Campaign to Undermine the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election

A seven-count indictment was unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging Andrii Derkach, 55, of Ukraine, with conspiracy to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Acts (IEEPA), bank fraud conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, and four counts of money laundering in connection with the purchase and maintenance of two condominiums in Beverly Hills, California. Derkach allegedly concealed his interest in the transactions and violated sanctions imposed in 2020. Derkach remains at large. The charges and forfeiture action announced today include the first use of criminal and forfeiture powers targeting the concealment of ownership by senior foreign political officials, passed as part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021.

Russian intelligence assets kept collaborating with Trump's officials during Biden's term.

FBI source Alexander Smirnov fabricated Biden bribery claims in 2020, repeated lies in 2023, and admitted Russian intelligence ties. He pleaded guilty on 16 Dec 2024.

BBC

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Alexander Smirnov: FBI source accused of Biden lies 'linked to Russian intelligence'

21 February 2024

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Mike Wendling
BBC News



President Joe Biden (left) with his son, Hunter, photographed in 2010

An ex-FBI informant accused of lying about President Joe Biden and his son Hunter has high-level ties with Russian intelligence, US prosecutors say.

Joe Biden

Ex-FBI informant pleads guilty to lying about Joe and Hunter Biden

Alexander Smirnov admits lying about Bidens' links to fake bribery scheme that played key role in impeachment effort

Associated Press

Mon 16 Dec 2024 21.25 CET

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Joe and Hunter Biden disembark from Air Force One in February 2023. Photograph: Elizabeth Frantz/Reuters

The conflict of interest reaches the top of the FBI. Its director, Kash Patel, received $25,000 on 8 July 2024 from Kremlin-linked filmmaker Igor Lopatonok's Global Tree Pictures for a film interview.

Kash Patel was paid by Russian filmmaker with Kremlin ties, documents show

Patel, Trump's nominee to be FBI director, was paid $25,000 last year by a film company that has promoted anti-Western views advanced by the Kremlin, documents show.

February 7, 2025 More than **1 year ago**

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POLITICO

EXCLUSIVE

FBI Director Kash Patel plans Russia trip

The plans come as the U.S. and Russia have failed to come to terms on ending the war in Ukraine.



FBI Director Kash Patel looks on during a news conference at the Justice Department headquarters in Washington, July 1, 2026. | Alex Wroblewski/AFP via Getty Images

By NAHAL TOOSI, KYLE CHENEY and JOHN SAKELLARIADIS
07/20/2026 11:52 PM GMT+3

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FBI Director Kash Patel is planning to visit Russia later this year, likely in mid-October, according to a U.S. official and a person familiar with the situation.

Lopatonok has also collaborated with GRU asset Andrii Derkach and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

Under Patel, the FBI is punishing agents who investigated those Russia ties. Mueller investigator Walter Giardina was fired on 8 Aug 2025.



Michael Caputo did PR for Putin at Gazprom Media in the 2000s, began working for Trump in 2014, and later collaborated with Kilimnik and Derkach.

Trump made him HHS spokesman in 2020 and appointed him to the President's Cancer Panel on 4 Oct 2026.

17/25



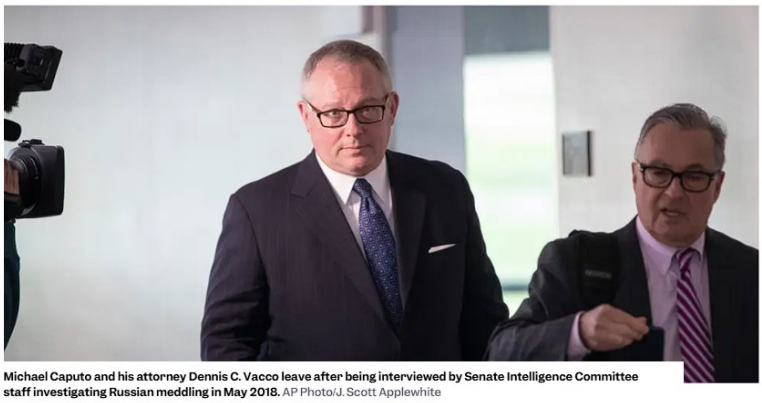
consulting practice to help Western companies acclimate. He also says he advised President Boris Yeltsin's re-election campaign and helped the new Russian government set up more open election laws. When the Russian economy tanked, so did his business. Caputo moved back to the U.S. in 2000 and consulted for Gazprom Media, a subsidiary of the Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom. After series of failed ventures, he eventually moved to Miami Beach to

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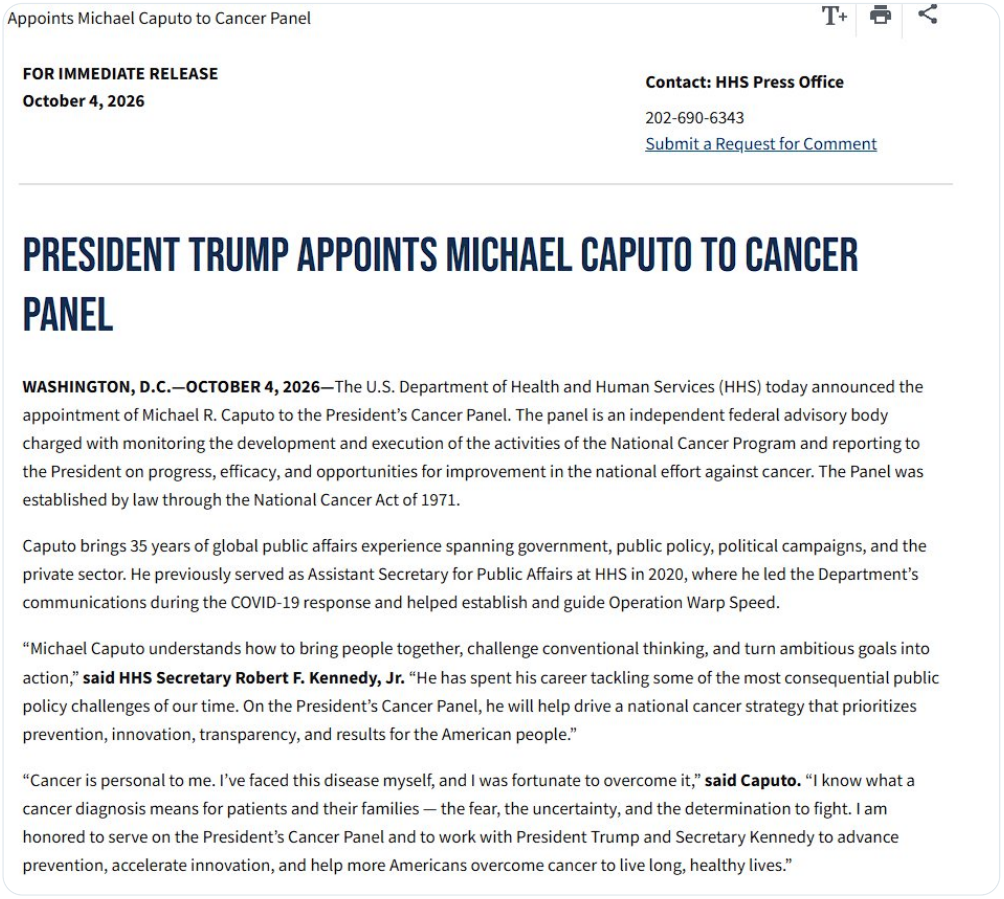
The US health department's new communications chief is a Trump loyalist and Roger Stone associate who spread conspiracies about Ukraine and Hunter Biden

By Tom Porter



Michael Caputo and his attorney Dennis C. Vacco leave after being interviewed by Senate Intelligence Committee staff investigating Russian meddling in May 2018. AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

Apr 16, 2020, 4:12 PM GMT+3



Appoints Michael Caputo to Cancer Panel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2026

Contact: HHS Press Office
202-690-6343
Submit a Request for Comment

PRESIDENT TRUMP APPOINTS MICHAEL CAPUTO TO CANCER PANEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—OCTOBER 4, 2026—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced the appointment of Michael R. Caputo to the President's Cancer Panel. The panel is an independent federal advisory body charged with monitoring the development and execution of the activities of the National Cancer Program and reporting to the President on progress, efficacy, and opportunities for improvement in the national effort against cancer. The Panel was established by law through the National Cancer Act of 1971.

Caputo brings 35 years of global public affairs experience spanning government, public policy, political campaigns, and the private sector. He previously served as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at HHS in 2020, where he led the Department's communications during the COVID-19 response and helped establish and guide Operation Warp Speed.

"Michael Caputo understands how to bring people together, challenge conventional thinking, and turn ambitious goals into action," **said HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.** "He has spent his career tackling some of the most consequential public policy challenges of our time. On the President's Cancer Panel, he will help drive a national cancer strategy that prioritizes prevention, innovation, transparency, and results for the American people."

"Cancer is personal to me. I've faced this disease myself, and I was fortunate to overcome it," **said Caputo.** "I know what a cancer diagnosis means for patients and their families — the fear, the uncertainty, and the determination to fight. I am honored to serve on the President's Cancer Panel and to work with President Trump and Secretary Kennedy to advance prevention, accelerate innovation, and help more Americans overcome cancer to live long, healthy lives."

George Papadopoulos, another central figure in Russiagate, and his wife, Simona Mangiante, have continued working for Kremlin propaganda.

They have worked with Igor Lopatonok; Mangiante interviewed GRU asset Andrii Derkach.

The couple often appear on Russian state media.

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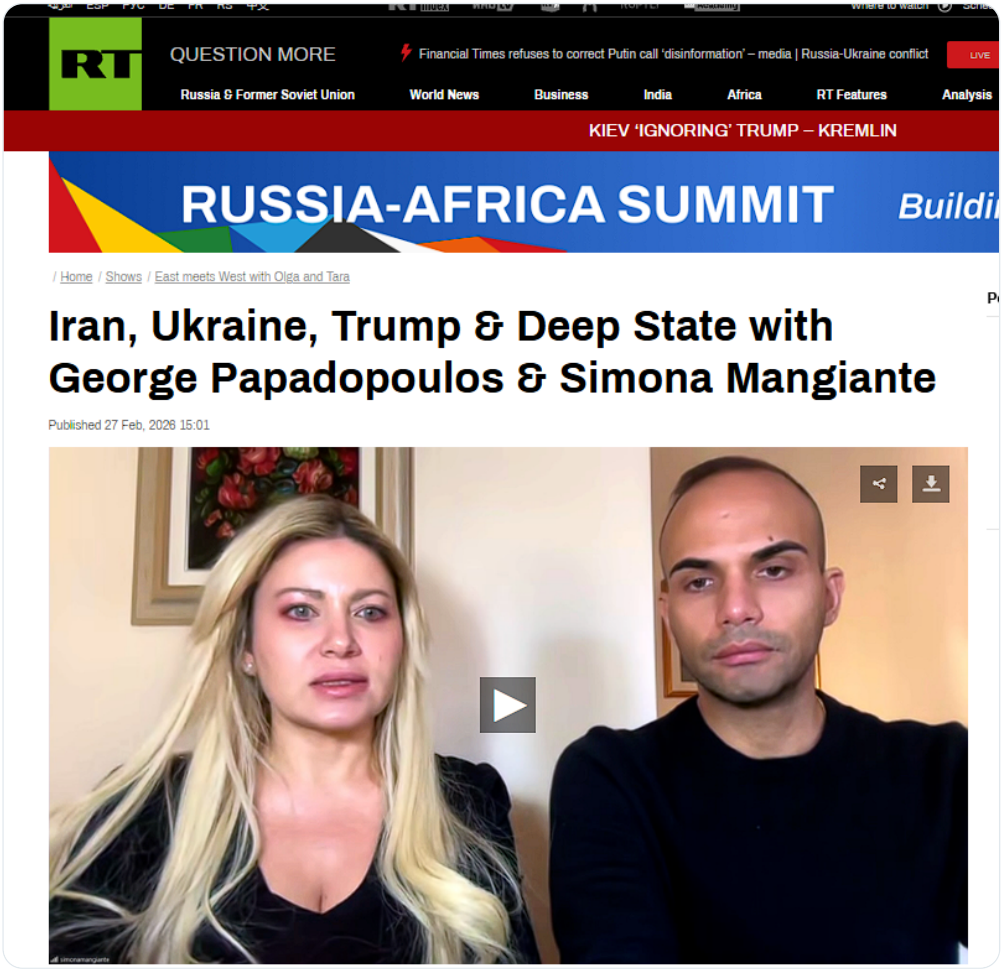
Ex-Trump advisers help to grow pro-Russia website that spreads misinformation

George Papadopoulos and others involved in Intelligencer, increasingly popular source of news in rightwing circles

US politics - live updates



George Papadopoulos and his wife Simona Mangiante in Washington in 2019. Photograph: Win McNamee/Getty Images


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Published 27 Feb, 2026 15:01


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Ex-People's Deputy Derkach visited Minsk and gave an interview to the wife of Trump's former adviser: the media disclosed the details of the scandal

04.01.2024 0 By WRITER.NS

On the eve of New Year's holidays, the former People's Deputy of Ukraine Andriy Derkach, who is suspected of treason and is also under sanctions in the United States, appeared in Minsk. On the territory of Belarus, he gave an interview to Trumpist journalist Simone Manjiante-Papadopoulos, writes obozrevatel.com.



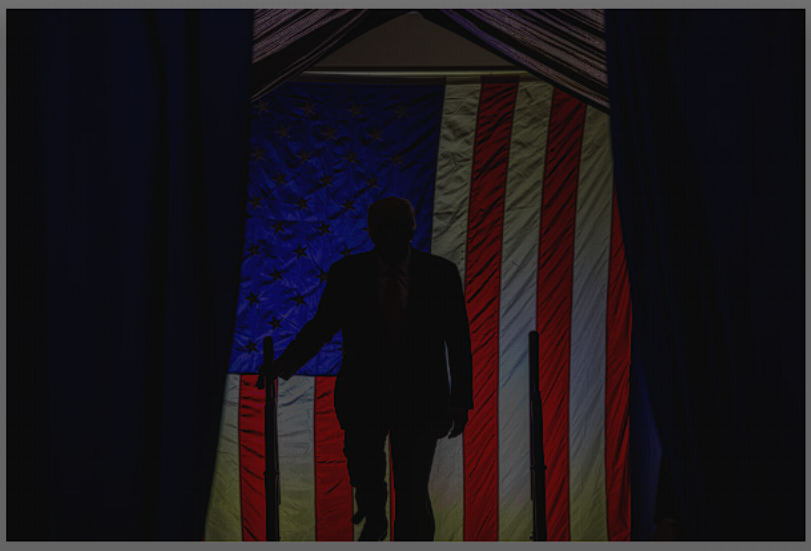
Trump campaign lawyer Bruce Marks was part of the team advising on the so-called “fake electors scheme” in Georgia.

He still has an active office in Russia and is a frequent contributor to Russian state propaganda media.

'Kind of Wild/Creative': Emails Shed Light on Trump Fake Electors Plan

Previously undisclosed communications among Trump campaign aides and outside advisers provide new insight into their efforts to overturn the election in the weeks leading to Jan. 6.

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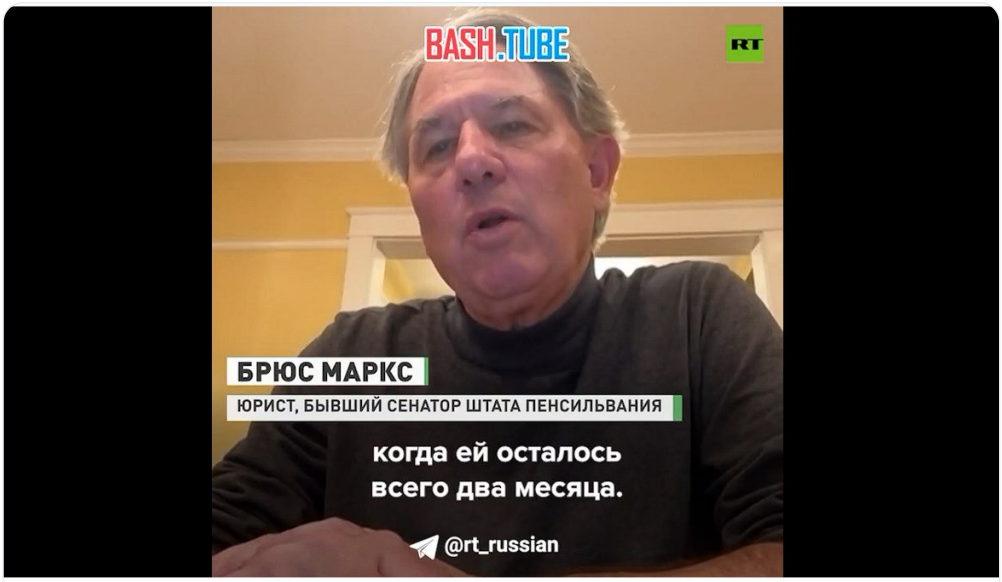
One Arizona Republican involved in the effort to reverse the election outcome advocated keeping a key element of the strategy quiet "so we can try to 'surprise' the Dems and media with it" on Jan. 6, 2021. Ash Ponders for The New York Times

Russia & Former Soviet Union | World News | Business | India | Africa | RT Features | Analysis

‘Russians are powerful fighters and to quote Trump, Zelensky doesn’t have a lot of cards’ – former state senator

Published 19 Sep, 2025 04:23





By authorizing the use of American long-range weapons against Russia, Biden wants to complicate Trump's negotiations with Putin.

Bruce Marks Brings Key U.S. Perspective to SPIEF 2026 Russia–U.S. Business Dialogue

June 17, 2026 Marks & Sokolov, LLC

June 4, 2026

Bruce Marks, Founder and Managing Director of Marks & Sokolov, LLC, was invited to the Russia–U.S. Business Dialogue at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2026, contributing his extensive experience in international business, cross-border disputes, and U.S.–Russia commercial relations.

The session, titled "Pragmatism as a Strategy: Business in the Era of the New Global Reality," brought together leading business executives, investors, policymakers, and international experts to discuss the future of economic cooperation between Russia and the United States amid a rapidly evolving geopolitical and economic landscape.

Drawing on decades of experience representing businesses, financial institutions, and sovereign entities in complex international matters, Mr. Marks shared insights on how companies can navigate uncertainty, preserve commercial relationships, and identify opportunities for growth despite political and regulatory challenges. His remarks emphasized the enduring importance of practical business engagement, legal certainty, and direct dialogue in maintaining channels of cooperation between market participants.

As global economic structures continue to evolve, the discussion focused on how businesses are adapting to changing realities, restructuring supply chains, entering new markets, and attracting investment in an increasingly fragmented environment. Participants explored emerging models of cooperation, strategies for building resilience, and areas where Russian and American businesses continue to find common interests.

SPIEF remains one of the world's premier forums for international economic cooperation, attracting leaders from government, business, finance, and academia. Marks & Sokolov is honored to participate in these important conversations and to contribute its experience and perspective on the legal, economic, and commercial issues shaping today's global marketplace.



Брюс Маркс|Bruce Marks

In June 2026, US Commission of Fine Arts chairman Rodney Mims Cook Jr., overseeing Trump's White House ballroom, held secret diplomatic talks with Kremlin officials at SPIEF in St Petersburg.

He has a long history of visiting Russia and is a fan of Russian architecture.

The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

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Trump Ballroom Commissioner Held Diplomatic Talks With Kremlin Officials – FT

Aug. 18, 2026



Rodney Mims Cook Jr. at SPIEF 2026. Olga Maltseva / AFP

Republican operative Jesse Benton's 2016 campaign-finance conviction was pardoned by Trump in Dec 2020. His 2022 conviction was for a 2016 $25,000 Trump Victory donation from Russian businessman Roman Vasilenko, a naval reserve officer who led a military unit's finances.

Investigation | Reporting

Decorated Russian Naval Veteran Funneled Thousands to Trump, RNC

By Scott Stedman | September 21, 2021 | Investigation, Reporting

A Russian businessman who once led the financial services of a military unit at the Leningrad Naval base funneled thousands of dollars to a Trump Super PAC and other Republican entities in 2016, *Forensic News* can reveal.

On Monday, the Department of Justice indicted two veteran GOP operatives, Doug Wead and Jesse Benton, for disguising the true source of funds of donations made in 2016. Now, *Forensic News* can report that the unnamed "Foreign National 1" in the indictment is Roman Vasilenko, a reserve naval officer whose resume, according to analysts, appears suspicious and suggests a relationship with Russian intelligence.

Forensic News **believes in transparency in the journalism process. Go behind-the-scenes to see how this story was created with the Stone video bibliography:**

Appeals court upholds conviction of GOP operative who steered Russian money to Trump camp

Jesse Benton played leading roles in the presidential campaigns of Ron and Rand Paul and worked briefly as Mitch McConnell's campaign manager.

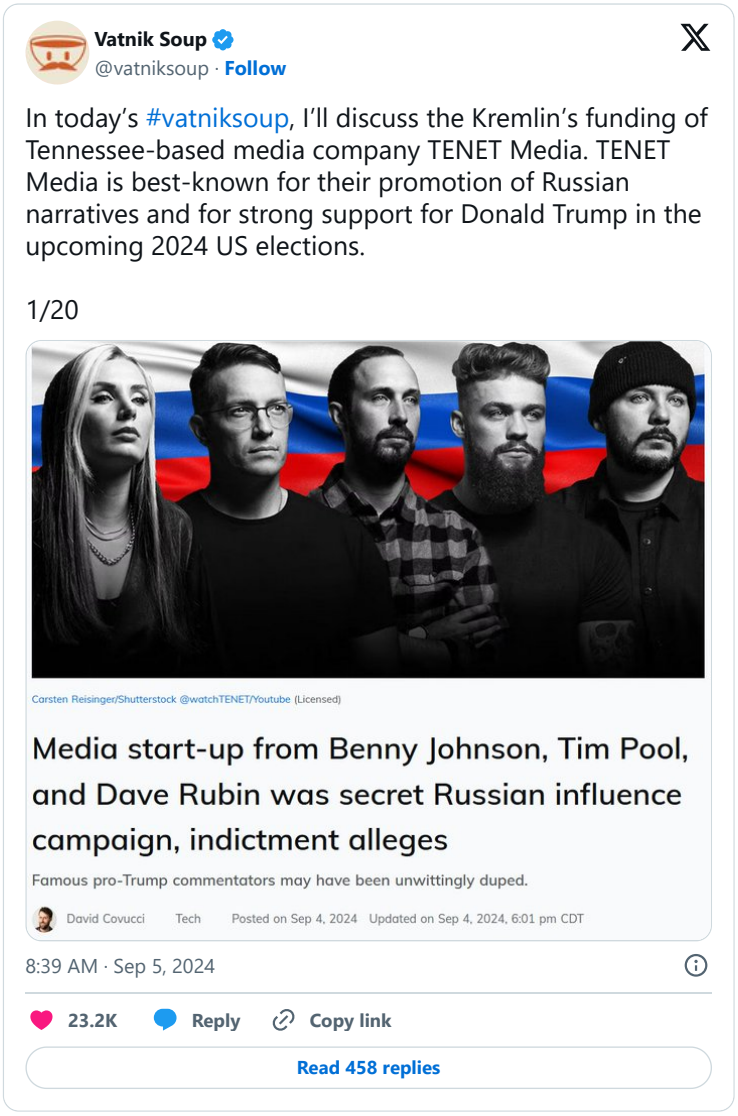


President Donald Trump shows the posthumous pardon for former world champion boxer Jack Johnson after signing it in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, on May 24, 2018. | Nicholas Kamm/Getty Images

RT secretly funded Tenet Media, whose pro-Trump influencers later joined Trump's White House press pool.

Tenet head Lauren Chen credited Trump official Joe Rittenhouse with her Dec 2025 US return. She visited the White House in Apr 2026.

22/25



BREAKING | BUSINESS

Trump Welcomes An Accused Russia Propagandist Back To The U.S.—And The White House Easter Egg Hunt

By Ty Roush, Former Staff. Ty Roush is a breaking news reporter based in New York City.

Published Apr 09, 2026, 02:50pm EDT

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TOPLINE

Conservative influencer Lauren Chen, whose media company was accused by the Department of Justice in 2024 of being a Kremlin-financed outfit that paid big-name influencers to push Russia propaganda, was among the crowd at the White House's Easter event, months after Trump officials helped her return to the U.S.



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Joe Rittenhouse ✓
@Overlord26

This Christmas I'm so happy to help correct the wrongs of the past administration. Being able to bring Lauren and her family back for Christmas would not be possible without new Leadership at the Whitehouse, FBI, CBP, and State Department.

Merry Christmas Lauren. Welcome Home.

> **Lauren Chen** ✓ @TheLaurenChen · 25 Dec 2025
> Merry Christmas, everyone!
>
> As we celebrate the birth of Christ, there is nowhere else I'd rather be than back here in Nashville 🇺🇸
> ...



Benny Johnson on Iran war: “I’ve been briefed by, let’s just call it, top-level Pentagon officials about what the endgame is”

Johnson: “Is Trump reconquering the world? That’s what this is all about. It’s not about Iran at all. It’s nothing to do with Iran.”

WRITTEN BY MEDIA MATTERS STAFF

PUBLISHED 03/06/26 10:44 AM EST



From the March 6, 2026, edition of *The Benny Show*, streamed on YouTube

DAILY BEAST Follow

Influencer Paid by Russia Added to White House Press Pool

Janna Brancolini
Fri, March 28, 2025 at 6:25 PM GMT+2
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Gage Skidmore/Wikimedia Commons

For fear of “politicization”, Washington ignored or forgot dozens of incidents it should have treated as treasonous, given Russia’s hostility to the US. The Kremlin gained access to Trump’s circle while America looked away.



On 16 Oct 2026, Trump waived most new Graham Act sanctions and tariffs on Russia. “America First” means Russia first and the Trump family’s private wealth first. America, the rest of the world and human rights come last.

24/25



Sec. 4. Waiver. (a) Pursuant to section 115(a) of the Graham Act, I hereby waive the application of any duties provided for in sections 112 and 113 of the Graham Act or this order. I have submitted to the Congress a certification that the issuance of such a waiver is in the national interests of the United States and a report explaining the basis for the certification, consistent with section 115(b) of the Graham Act.

(b) Pursuant to section 115(a) of the Graham Act, I hereby waive the application of the sanctions provision provided for in section 102(d) of the Graham Act with respect to foreign persons and the restrictions provided for in section 102(d) of the Graham Act with respect to persons. For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this order affects any sanctions or other measures provided for under any Executive Order issued to address the national emergency that I continued on March 24, 2026, with respect to specified harmful foreign activities of the Government of the Russian Federation (91 *Fed. Reg.* 15515), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the Graham Act, including with respect to all persons sanctioned under any such Executive Order. I have submitted to the Congress a certification that the issuance of such a waiver is in the national interests of the United States and a report explaining the basis for the certification, consistent with section 115(b) of the Graham Act.

(c) Pursuant to section 115(a) of the Graham Act, I hereby waive the application of the following sanctions provisions with respect to foreign persons and restrictions with respect to persons: sections 102(a), 102(e), 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, and 117 of the Graham Act. I have submitted to the Congress a certification that the issuance of such a waiver is in the national interests of the United States and a report explaining the basis for the certification, consistent with section 115(b) of the Graham Act.

(d) The waivers described in subsections (a) through (c) of this section shall remain in effect until such time as the President or the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Trade Representative, as appropriate, determine that further action is appropriate.

Thanks to @Martinlaineolen for preparing the ingredients for this special soup.

The Kremlin spends $5 billion a year on propaganda to manufacture passivity for its invasions. Fact-based research to counter that is crucial — please support our work:

25/25



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Vatnik Soup: Your most comprehensive resource on pro-Kremlin disinformation and propaganda.

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