

Veteran Democratic Operative Linked to Restart of Case Against Trump



Matthew Colangelo

by Lee Smith

Recent press reports show that a veteran Democratic political operative played a large part in restarting the case against Donald Trump that the prior Manhattan District Attorney, the Justice Department, and Alvin Bragg himself previously declined to prosecute. Matthew Colangelo is closely aligned with President Joe Biden and his former boss Barack Obama.

Colangelo was a senior official in the Biden Justice Department and filled a variety of roles in the Obama administration, as an economic counselor, and then in the Departments of Labor and Justice.

The appearance of yet another Obama-Biden deputy in the nearly seven-year-long and ongoing anti-Trump operation may help illuminate why precedent and protocol have been trashed for the purpose of charging a former American president and the likely Republican candidate for 2024.

Trump's opponents argue that the extraordinary punishment visited on him is commensurate with his extraordinary violations of political and social norms. But what if the norm-breaker at the center of the drama isn't the 45th president of the United States but is rather his predecessor and his successor?

The idea that Trump is a uniquely malevolent figure in American civic life has motivated his adversaries from the start. Indeed, that was the point of Russiagate—to portray Trump as someone who was fundamentally disloyal to America, a traitor. Yet even a cursory look at his policies, as well as his demeanor, shows that he's squarely within the mainstream of American politics and culture.

The economic nationalism he advocates was an article of faith of the Founding Fathers. His rough-and-ready populism is modeled after Andrew Jackson. His confrontational, and sometimes coarse, manner is reminiscent of Lyndon Johnson. Remember that Trump hosted one of the top TV shows in U.S. history for over a decade, a difficult feat for anyone and nearly impossible for someone not tapped into America at its roots.

Nor is there anything unusual about the media's loathing of Trump. Sure, the animus is supercharged by the advent of social media, but it's otherwise consistent with a half-century-long trend during which the press has routinely villainized Republican presidents. Whether they earned the opprobrium, as Richard Nixon did, or not, made no difference—GOP leaders are, by definition, Democratic Party targets. Even George W. Bush, now pleased to be photographed

with Democratic peers Obama and Bill Clinton, was, like Trump, the subject of assassination fantasies publicly disseminated in books and movies.

So if Trump is a recognizably American figure who draws on typically American ideas, forms, and styles, how did he wind up facing down a campaign of destruction unlike anything our politics has ever seen?

For answers, let's go back to the beginning of the anti-Trump operation—July 5, 2016, when a Hillary Clinton campaign contractor first furnished the FBI with phony reports of the Republican candidate's alleged ties to Russia. And yet the feature players in Russiagate were not Clinton operatives who smeared the celebrity billionaire in the press, but U.S. intelligence officials who opened an investigation on a presidential candidate. This, too, marked a first in American politics.

Crucially, the operation involved top U.S. spy chiefs who answered directly to the then-president of the United States. Obama was aware of it before the FBI opened its Trump-Russia probe. At the end of July 2016, CIA Director [John Brennan](#) [briefed](#) him that Clinton approved “a proposal from one of her foreign policy advisers to vilify Donald Trump by stirring up a scandal claiming interference by the Russian security service.”

And Obama demanded updates on the anti-Trump campaign. According to a September 2016 text exchange ([pdf](#)) between two FBI agents running the Trump investigation, “POTUS”—the President of the United States—“wants to know everything we're doing.”

As Obama was leaving the White House in January 2017, he scattered evidence to help frame the incoming president as a Russian agent. According to a memo left by his national security adviser Susan Rice, Obama “wants to be sure that, as

we engage with the incoming team, we are mindful to ascertain if there is any reason that we cannot share information fully as it relates to Russia.”

In that same period, dozens of senior Obama officials, including Biden, were tasking U.S. intelligence services to spy on top Trump transition team official Michael Flynn. Biden suggested how law enforcement might go about prosecuting him.

Obama’s perverse obsession with Flynn continued long after the retired three-star general left the White House. In May 2020, Obama leaked the contents of a phone conversation in which he claimed that because of the Justice Department’s decision to drop charges against Flynn, the “rule of law is at risk.”

Has Obama personally engineered every aspect of the anti-Trump campaign? Of course not, but as we see, he has been eager to show his involvement throughout. Indeed, Obama stayed in Washington, D.C. throughout Trump’s term, the first ex-president to take up residence in the capital since Woodrow Wilson—and Wilson, incapacitated by a stroke, had no choice.

And thus, the strategy driving the long anti-Trump campaign, starting with Russiagate and up to the indictment, is to make Trump seem uniquely un-American, even treasonous. In turn, Obama and Biden’s actions are made to seem legitimate and lawful no matter how deeply they cut against the American grain.

But using the color of law to destroy a political opponent is not normal, not in America, and we will be living with the consequences for years to come.

First published in the [*Epoch Times*](#).