

Special Counsel Mueller: Disingenuous and Dishonest

Larry C. Johnson sees real meat on the bone for Barr's upcoming investigation of spying by law enforcement and intelligence on the Trump campaign. And Trump has tweeted about it.

On Wednesday Donald Trump tweeted:

"Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson accuses United Kingdom Intelligence of helping Obama Administration Spy on the 2016 Trump Presidential Campaign."
[@OANN](#) WOW! It is now just a question of time before the truth comes out, and when it does, it will be a beauty!

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [April 24, 2019](#)

A spokesperson for the GCHQ, Britain's electronic spying agency, reacted in a statement: "As we have previously stated, the allegations that GCHQ was asked to conduct 'wire tapping' against the then-president elect are nonsense. They are utterly ridiculous and should be ignored."

Johnson developed his theory on his blog, republished here.

By [Larry C Johnson](#)

Sic Semper Tyrannis



While President Donald Trump is correct to celebrate the Mueller report's conclusion that no one on Trump's side of the ledger attempted to or succeeded in collaborating or colluding with the Russian government or Russian spies, there remains a dark cloud behind the silver lining. And I am not referring to the claims of alleged obstruction of justice.

A careful reading of the report reveals that Mueller has issued findings that are both disingenuous and dishonest. The report is a failed hatchet job. Part of the failure can be attributed to the amount of material that Attorney General William Barr allowed to be released. It appears that Bill Barr's light editing may have been intended to expose the bias and sloppiness of Special Counsel Robert Mueller and his team.

Let us start with the case of trying to build a Trump Tower in Moscow. If you were to believe that the Steele Dossier accurately reported Russian President Vladimir Putin's attitude towards Trump, then a Trump real estate deal in Moscow was a slam dunk. According to one of Christopher Steele's breathless reports:

"The Kremlin's cultivation operation on TRUMP also had comprised offering him various lucrative real estate development business deals in Russia, especially in relation to the ongoing 2018 World Cup soccer tournament. However, so far, for reasons unknown, TRUMP had not taken up any of these."

Then there is reality. The impetus, the encouragement for the Moscow project came from one man – [Felix Sater](#). Here from page 69 of the Mueller Report:

In the late summer of 2015, the Trump Organization received a new inquiry about pursuing a Trump Tower project in Moscow. In approximately September 2015, Felix Sater . . . contacted Cohen on behalf of I.C. Expert Investment Company (I.C. Expert), a Russian real-estate

development corporation controlled by Andrei Vladimirovich Rozov. J07 Sater had known Rozov since approximately 2007 and, in 2014, had served as an agent on behalf of Rozov during Rozov's purchase of a building in New York City. 30S Sater later contacted Rozov and proposed that I.C. Expert pursue a Trump Tower Moscow project in which I.C. Expert would license the name and brand from the Trump Organization but construct the building on its own. Sater worked on the deal with Rozov and another employee of I.C. Expert.

To reiterate – if the Steele Dossier were based on truthful intelligence then the Trump Organization only had to sit back, stretch out its hands and seize the moment. Instead, little Felix Sater keeps coming back to the well. In January 2016, according to the Mueller report:

Sater then sent a draft invitation for Cohen to visit Moscow to discuss the Trump Moscow project, along with a note to “[t]ell me if the letter is good as amended by me or make whatever changes you want and send it back to me.”

After a further round of edits, on January 25, 2016, Sater sent Cohen an invitation- signed by Andrey Ryabinskiy of the company MHJ- to travel to “Moscow for a working visit” about the “prospects of development and the construction business in Russia,” “the various land plots available suited for construction of this enormous Tower,” and “the opportunity to co-ordinate a follow up visit to Moscow by Mr. Donald Trump.

This produced nothing. No deal, no trip. But Sater

persisted, targeting Michael Cohen, Trump's personal lawyer and an executive in the Trump Organization:

Beginning in late 2015, Sater repeatedly tried to arrange for Cohen and candidate Trump, as representatives of the Trump Organization, to travel to Russia to meet with Russian government officials and possible financing partners. . . .

Into the spring of 2016, Sater and Cohen continued to discuss a trip to Moscow in connection with the Trump Moscow project. On April 20, 2016, Sater wrote Cohen, "[t]he People wanted to know when you are coming?"

On May 4, 2016, Sater followed up:

"I had a chat with Moscow. ASSUMING the trip does happen the question is before or after the convention. I said I believe, but don't know for sure, that's it's probably after the convention. Obviously the pre-meeting trip (you only) can happen anytime you want but he 2 big guys where [sic) the question. I said I would confirm and revert."

On May 5, 2016, Sater wrote to Cohen:

"Peskov would like to invite you as his guest to the St. Petersburg Forum which is Russia's Davos it's June 16-19. He wants to meet there with you and possibly introduce you to either Putin or Medvedev, as they are not sure if 1 or both will be there. This is perfect. The entire business class of Russia will be there as well."

On June 14, 2016, Cohen met Sater in the lobby of the Trump Tower in New York and informed him that he would not

be traveling at that time.

Why was Felix Sater the one repeatedly identified pushing to arrange deals with the Russians and yet did not face any subsequent charges by the Mueller team? Sater had been working as part of the Trump team since 2003. Why is it that the proposed deals and travel to Moscow came predominantly from Felix Sater? As I noted in my previous piece – [The FBI Tried and Failed to Entrap Trump](#) – Sater was an active FBI undercover informant. He had been working with the FBI since 1998. When he agreed to start working as an undercover informant aka cooperator in December 1998 guess who signed off on the deal? Andrew Weissman, a member of Mueller's special counsel team. You can see the [deal here](#). It was signed Dec. 10, 1998.

An honest prosecutor would have and should have disclosed this fact. He, Sater, was the one encouraging the Trump team to cozy up to Russia. Mueller does not disclose one single instance of Trump or Cohen or any of the Trump kids calling Sater on the carpet and chewing his ass for not bringing them deals and not opening doors in Russia. Omitting this key fact goes beyond simple disingenuity. It is a conscious lie.

The circumstantial evidence indicates that Sater was doing this at the behest of FBI handlers. We do not yet know who they are.

But Sater's behavior and status as an FBI Informant was not an isolated incident. We also have the case of Michael Caputo and Roger Stone being approached by a Russian gangster named Henry Greenberg. According

to democratdossier.com:

Greenberg's birth name is Gennady Vasilievich Vostretsov, the son of Yekatrina Vostretsova and Vasliy Vostretsov. He later adopted new names twice as a result of two different marriages and became Gennady V. Arzhanik and later Henry Oknyansky. Henry Greenberg is not a legal alias, but he uses it quite commonly in recent years.

But you would not know this from reading the Mueller report. Mr. Disingenuous strikes again:

In the spring of 2016, Trump campaign advisor Michael Caputo learned through a Florida-based Russian business partner that another Florida-based Russian, Henry Oknyansky (who also went by the name Henry Greenberg), claimed to have information pertaining to Hillary Clinton. Caputo notified Roger Stone and brokered communication between Stone and Oknyansky.

Oknyansky and Stone set up a May 2016 in-person meeting.²⁶⁰ Oknyansky was accompanied to the meeting by Alexei Rasin, a Ukrainian associate involved in Florida real estate. At the meeting, Rasin offered to sell Stone derogatory information on Clinton that Rasin claimed to have obtained while working for Clinton. Rasin claimed to possess financial statements demonstrating Clinton's involvement in money laundering with Rasin's companies. According to Oknyansky, Stone asked if the amounts in question totaled millions of dollars but was told it was closer to hundreds of thousands. Stone refused the offer, stating that Trump would not pay for opposition research.

How does a guy like Vorkretsov/Greenberg, with an extensive criminal record and circumstantial ties to the Russian mob gain entrance into the United States? Very simple answer. He too [was an FBI informant, according to the democrat dossier:](#)

In an affidavit, Vostretsov explained to an immigration judge he worked for the FBI for 17 years throughout the world, including in the US, Iran and North Korea. He explained in the same paperwork the FBI granted him several temporary visas to visit the US in exchange for information about criminal activities.

Please take time to read the full dossier at [democrat dossier.](#)

This is more than an odd coincidence. This is a pattern. The FBI was targeting the Trump campaign and personnel in a deliberate effort to implicate them in wanting to work with Russians.

And there is more. [George Papadopoulos](#), a member of the Trump campaign, was entrapped by individuals linked to British MI-6 and the CIA with offers to provide meetings with Russians and Putin. The Mueller account is a lie. Here is another section of it:

In late April 2016, Papadopoulos was told by London-based professor Joseph Mifsud, immediately after Mifsud 's return from a trip to Moscow, that the Russian government had obtained "dirt" on candidate Clinton in the form of thousands of emails. One week later, on May 6, 2016, Papadopoulos suggested to a representative of a foreign

government that the Trump Campaign had received indications from the Russian government that it could assist the Campaign through the anonymous release of information that would be damaging to candidate Clinton.

Papadopoulos shared information about Russian “dirt ” with people outside of the Campaign, and the Office investigated whether he also provided it to a Campaign official. Papadopoulos and the Campaign officials with whom he interacted told the Office that they did not recall that Papadopoulos passed them the information. Throughout the relevant period of time and for several months thereafter, Papadopoulos worked with Mifsud and two Russian nationals to arrange a meeting between the Campaign and the Russian government. That meeting never came to pass.

Once again, the Mueller team treats the provocateur – i.e., Joseph Mifsud – as some simple guy with ties to Russia’s political elites. Another egregious lie. Mifsud was not working on behalf of Russia. He was deployed by MI-6. *Disobedient Media* has been on the forefront of exposing Mifsud’s ties to Western intelligence in general and the Brits in particular. Quoting now from *Disobedient Media*:

Mifsud’s alleged links to Russian intelligence are summarily debunked by his close working relationship with Claire Smith, a major figure in the upper echelons of British intelligence. A number of Twitter users recently observed that Joseph Mifsud had been photographed standing next to Claire Smith of the U.K. Joint Intelligence Committee at Mifsud’s LINK campus in Rome. *Newsman* and *Buzzed* later reported that the professor’s name and biography had been removed from the campus website,

writing that the mysterious removal took place after Mifsud had served the institution for “years.”

WikiLeaks Editor-in-Chief Julian Assange likewise noted the connection between Mifsud and Smith in a Twitter thread, additionally pointing out his connections with Saudi intelligence: “[Mifsud] and Claire Smith of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee and eight-year member of the UK Security Vetting panel both trained Italian security services at the Link University in Rome and appear to both be present in this [photo].”

The photograph in question originated on Geodiplomatics.com, where it specified that Joseph Mifsud is indeed standing next to Claire Smith, who was attending a: “...Training program on International Security which was organised by Link Campus University and London Academy of Diplomacy.” The event is listed as taking place in October 2012.

This is not a mere matter of Mueller and his team “failing” to disclose some important facts. If they were operating honestly, they should have investigated Mifsud, Greenberg and Sater. But they did not. Two of the three alleged Russian stooges – Sater and Greenberg – have ties to the FBI. And Mifsud has been living and working in the belly of the intelligence community.

When you put these facts together it is clear that there is real meat on the bone for Barr’s upcoming investigation of the “spying” that was being done on the Trump campaign by law enforcement and intelligence. These facts must become a part of the public consciousness. The foreign country that

worked feverishly to meddle in the 2016 presidential election and the subsequent rule of Donald Trump is the United Kingdom. Russia is the patsy.

Larry C. Johnson is a former CIA analyst and counterterrorism official at the State Department. This article first appeared on [Sic Semper Tyrannis](#).

Watch the 18th Vigil for Julian Assange

The 18th Unity4J vigil for Julian Assange was held Friday evening. In this edition we broke down Trump lawyer Michael Cohn's testimony regarding WikiLeaks, Australia's repressive press law, as well as other news.

You can watch it here:

The Donald in Wonderland

One question as we head to the November midterm elections, a referendum on the president, is: Could Donald Trump be a one-man version of either Enron or Lehman Brothers, someone who cooked "the books" until he implodes? asks Nomi Prins.

By Nomi Prins

TomDispatch



Once upon a time, there was a little-known energy company called Enron. In its 16-year life, it went from being dubbed America's most [innovative company](#) by *Fortune Magazine* to being the poster child of American corporate deceit. Using a classic recipe for book-cooking, Enron ended up in bankruptcy with jail time for those involved. Its shareholders lost [\\$74 billion](#) in the four years leading up to its bankruptcy in 2001.

A decade ago, the flameout of my former employer, Lehman Brothers, the global financial firm, proved far more devastating, contributing as it did to a series of events that ignited a global financial meltdown. Americans lost an estimated \$12.8 trillion in the havoc.

Despite the differing scales of those disasters, there was a common thread: both companies used financial tricks to make themselves appear so much healthier than they actually were. They both faked the numbers, thanks to off-the-books or offshore mechanisms and eluded investigations... until they collapsed.

Now, here's a question for you as we head for the November midterm elections, sure to be seen as a referendum on the president: Could Donald Trump be a one-man version of either Enron or Lehman Brothers, someone who cooked "the books" until he implodes?

Major Landlord Accused Of Antiblack Bias in City

The Department of Justice **By MORRIS KARLAN** won them all. We were charged with discrimination against blacks in apartment rentals, brought suit in Federal Court in Brooklyn yesterday against the Trump Management Corporation, a major owner and manager of real estate here.

The corporation, which owns and rents more than 14,000 apartments in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, was accused of violating the Fair Housing Act of 1968 in its operation of 39 buildings. Most are in Coney Island, Brooklyn, and in Jamaica Estates and Forest Hills, Queens.

Seeking an injunction to halt alleged discriminatory practices, the Government contended that Trump Management had refused to rent or negotiate rentals "because of race and color."

Mr. Trump and his father, Fred C. Trump, the principal stockholder and corporate board chairman, were also named as defendants. They are required to respond to the complaint within 20 days. The Trump family has been in the real-estate business for more than 40 years.

In Washington, J. Stanley Pottinger, assistant attorney general in charge of the Justice Department's civil-rights division, termed the suit the second major rental discrimination action begun by the department in the last two years.

The first involved Samuel J. Lefrak, one of the country's

Since we've never seen his tax returns, right now we really don't know. What we do know is that he's been dodging bullets ever since the Justice Department accused him of violating the Fair Housing Act in his operation of 39 buildings in New York City in 1973. Unlike famed 1920s mob boss Al Capone, he may never get done in by something as simple as tax evasion, but time will tell.

Rest assured of one thing though: he won't go down easily, even if he is already the subject of multiple investigations and a plethora of legal slings and

arrows. Of course, his methods should be familiar. As President Calvin Coolidge so famously put it, “the business of America is business.” And the business of business is to circumvent or avoid the heat... until it can’t.

The Safe

So far, Treasury Secretary and former Trump national campaign finance chairman Steven Mnuchin has remained out of the legal fray that’s sweeping away some of his fellow campaign associates. Certainly, he and his wife have grandiose tastes. And, yes, his claim that his hedge fund, Dune Capital Management, used offshore tax havens only for his clients, not to help him evade taxes himself, represents a stretch of the imagination. Other than that, however, there seems little else to investigate – for now. Still, as Treasury secretary he does oversee a federal agency that means the world to Donald Trump, namely the Internal Revenue Service, which just happens to be located across a courtyard from the Trump International Hotel on Washington’s Pennsylvania Avenue.

As it happens, the IRS in the Trump era still doesn’t have a commissioner, only an acting head. What it may have, National Enquirer-style, is genuine presidential secrets in the form of Donald Trump’s elusive tax returns. Last fall, outgoing IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said that there were plans to relocate them to a shiny new safe where they would evidently remain.

In 2016, Trump became the first candidate since President Richard Nixon not to disclose his tax returns. During the campaign, he insisted that those returns were undergoing an IRS audit and that he would not release them until it was completed. (No one at the IRS has ever confirmed that being audited in any way prohibits the release of tax information.) The president’s pledge to do so remains unfulfilled and last year counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway noted that the White House was “not going to release his tax returns,” adding – undoubtedly thinking about his base – “people didn’t care.”

On April 17, the White House announced that the president would defer even filing his 2017 tax returns until this October. As every president since Nixon has undergone a mandatory audit while in office, count on American taxpayers hearing the same excuse for the rest of his term, even if Congress were to decide to invoke a 1924 IRS provision to view them.

Still, Conway may have a point when it comes to the public. After all, tax dodging is as American as fireworks on the Fourth of July. According to one study, every year the U.S. loses \$400 billion in unpaid taxes, much of it hidden in offshore tax havens.

Yet the financial disclosures that The Donald did make during election campaign

2016 indicate that there are more than 500 companies in over two dozen countries, mostly with few to no employees or real offices, that feature him as their “president.” Let’s face it, someone like Trump would only create a business universe of such Wall Street-esque complexity if he wanted to hide something. He was likely trying to evade taxes, shield himself and his family from financial accountability, or hide the dubious health of parts of his business empire. As a colleague of mine at Bear Stearns once put it, when tax-haven companies pile up like dirty laundry, there’s a high likelihood that their uses aren’t completely clean.

Now, let’s consider what we know of Donald Trump’s financial adventures, taxes and all. It’s quite a story and, even though it already feels like forever, it’s only beginning to be told.

The Trump Organization

Atop the non-White House branch of the Trump dynasty is the Trump Organization. To comply with federal conflict-of-interest requirements, The Donald officially turned over that company’s reins to his sons, Eric and Donald Jr. For all the obvious reasons, he was supposed to distance himself from his global business while running the country.

Only that didn’t happen and not just because every diplomat and lobbyist in town started to frequent his money-making new hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue. Now, according to *The New York Times*, the Manhattan district attorney’s office is considering pressing criminal charges against the Trump Organization and two of its senior officials because the president’s lawyer, Michael Cohen, paid off an adult film actress and a former *Playboy* model to keep their carnal knowledge to themselves before the election.

Though Cohen effectively gave Stormy Daniels \$130,000 and Karen McDougal \$150,000 to keep them quiet, the Trump Organization then paid Cohen even more, \$420,000, funds it didn’t categorize as a reimbursement for expenses, but as a “retainer.” In its internal paperwork, it then termed that sum as “legal expenses.”

The D.A.’s office is evidently focusing its investigation on how the Trump Organization classified that payment of \$420,000, in part for the funds Cohen raised from the equity in his home to calm the Stormy (so to speak). Most people take out home equity loans to build a garage or pay down some debt. Not Cohen. It’s a situation that could become far thornier for Trump. As Cohen already knew, Trump couldn’t possibly wield his pardon power to absolve his former lawyer, since it only applies to those convicted of federal charges, not state ones.

And that's bad news for the president. As Lanny Davis, Cohen's lawyer, put it, "If those payments were a crime for Michael Cohen, then why wouldn't they be a crime for Donald Trump?"

The bigger question is: What else is there? Those two payoffs may, after all, just represent the beginning of the woes facing both the Trump Organization and the Trump Foundation, which has been the umbrella outfit for businesses that have incurred charges of lobbying violations (not disclosing payment to a local newspaper to promote favorable casino legislation) and gaming law violations. His organization has also been accused of misleading investors, engaging in currency-transaction-reporting crimes, and improperly accounting for money used to buy betting chips, among a myriad of other transgressions. To speculate on overarching corporate fraud would not exactly be a stretch.

Unlike his casinos, the Trump Organization has not (yet) gone bankrupt, nor – were it to do so – is it in a class with Enron or Lehman Brothers. Yet it does have something in common with both of them: piles of money secreted in places designed to hide its origins, uses, and possibly end-users. The question some authority may pursue someday is: If Donald Trump was willing to be a part of a scheme to hide money paid to former lovers, wouldn't he do the same for his businesses?

The Trump Foundation

Questions about Trump's charity, the Donald J. Trump Foundation, have abounded since campaign 2016. They prompted New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood to file a lawsuit on June 14 against the foundation, also naming its board of directors, including his sons and his daughter Ivanka. It cites "a pattern of persistent illegal conduct... occurring over more than a decade, that includes extensive unlawful political coordination with the Trump presidential campaign, repeated and willful self-dealing transactions to benefit Mr. Trump's personal and business interests, and violations of basic legal obligations for non-profit foundations."

As *The New York Times* reported, "The lawsuit accused the charity and members of Mr. Trump's family of sweeping violations of campaign finance laws, self-dealing, and illegal coordination with Mr. Trump's presidential campaign." It also alleged that for four years – 2007, 2012, 2013, and 2014 – Trump himself placed his John Hancock below incorrect statements on the foundation's tax returns.

The main issue in question: Did the Trump Foundation use any of its funds to benefit The Donald or any of his businesses directly? Underwood thinks so. As she pointed out, it "was little more than a checkbook for payments from Mr.

Trump or his businesses to nonprofits, regardless of their purpose or legality.” Otherwise it seems to have employed no one and, according to the lawsuit, its board of directors has not met since 1999.

Because Trump ran all of his enterprises, he was also personally responsible for signing their tax returns. His charitable foundation was no exception. Were he found to have knowingly provided false information on its tax returns, he could someday face perjury charges.

On August 31, the foundation’s lawyers fought back, filing papers of their own, calling the lawsuit, as *The New York Times* put it, “a political attack motivated by the former attorney general’s ‘record of antipathy’ against Mr. Trump.” They were referring to Eric Schneiderman, who had actually resigned the previous May – consider this an irony under the circumstances – after being accused of sexual assault by former girlfriends.

The New York state court system has, in fact, emerged as a vital force in the pushback against the president and his financial shenanigans. As Zephyr Teachout, recent Democratic candidate for New York attorney general, pointed out, it is “one of the most important legal offices in the entire country to both resist and present an alternative to what is happening at the federal level.” And indeed it had begun fulfilling that responsibility with The Donald long before the Mueller investigation was even launched.

In 2013, Schneiderman filed a civil suit against Trump University, calling it a sham institution that engaged in repeated fraudulent behavior. In 2016, Trump finally settled that case in court, agreeing to a \$25 million payment to its former students – something that (though we don’t, of course, have the tax returns to confirm this) probably also proved to be a tax write-off for him.

These days, the New York attorney general’s office could essentially create a branch only for matters Trumpian. So far, it has brought more than 100 legal or administrative actions against the president and congressional Republicans since he took office.

Still, don’t sell the foundation short. It did, in the end, find a way to work for the greater good – of Donald Trump. He and his wife, Melania, for instance, used the “charity” to purchase a now infamous six-foot portrait of himself for \$20,000 – and true to form, according to *The Washington Post*, even that purchase could turn out to be a tax violation. Such “self-dealing” is considered illegal. Of course, we’re talking about someone who “used \$258,000 from the foundation to pay off legal settlements that involved his for-profit businesses.” That seems like the definition of self-dealing.

The Trump Team

The president swears that he has an uncanny ability to size someone up in a few seconds, based on attitude, confidence, and a handshake – that, in other words, just as there's the art of the deal, so, too, there's the art of choosing those who will represent him, stand by him, and take bullets for him, his White House, and his business enterprises. And for a while, he did indeed seem to be a champion when it came to surrounding himself with people who had a special knack for hiding money, tax documents, and secret payoffs from public view.

These days – think of them as the era of attrition for Donald Trump – that landscape looks a lot emptier and less inviting.

On August 21, his former campaign manager, Paul Manafort, was convicted in Virginia of “five counts of tax fraud, two counts of bank fraud, and one count of failure to disclose a foreign bank account.” (On September 14th, he would make a deal with Robert Mueller and plead guilty to two counts of conspiracy.) On that same August day, Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, also pled guilty to eight different federal crimes in the Manhattan U.S. attorney's office, including – yep – tax evasion.

Three days later, prosecutors in the Cohen investigation granted immunity to the Trump Organization's chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg. A loyal employee of the Trump family for more than four decades, he had also served as treasurer for the Donald J. Trump Foundation. If anyone other than the president and his children knows the financial and tax secrets of the Trump empire, it's him. And now, he may be ready to talk. Lurking in his future testimony could be yet another catalyst in a coming Trump tax debacle.

And don't forget David Pecker, CEO of American Media, the company that publishes the *National Enquirer*. Pecker bought and buried stories for The Donald for what seems like forever. He, too, now has an immunity deal in the federal investigation of Cohen (and so Trump), evidently in return for providing information on the president's hush-money deals to bury various exploits that he came to find unpalatable.

The question is this: Did Trump know of Cohen's hush-money payments? Cohen has certainly indicated that he did and Pecker seems to have told federal prosecutors a similar story. As Cohen said in court of Pecker, “I and the CEO of a media company, at the request of the candidate, worked together” to keep the public in the dark about such payments and Trump's involvement in them.

The president's former lawyer faces up to 65 years in prison. That's enough time to make him consider what other tales he might be able to tell in return for a

lighter sentence, including possibly exposing various tax avoidance techniques he and his former client cooked up.

And don't think that Cohen, Pecker, and Weisselberg are going to be the last figures to come forward with such stories as the Trump team begins to come unglued.

In the cases of Enron and Lehman Brothers, both companies unraveled after multiple shell games imploded. Enron's losses were being hidden in multiple offshore entities. In the case of Lehman Brothers, staggeringly over-valued assets were being pledged to borrow yet more money to buy similar assets. In both cases, rigged games were being played in the shadows, while vital information went undisclosed to the public – until it was way too late.

Donald Trump's equivalent shell games still largely remain to be revealed. They may simply involve hiding money trails to evade taxes or to secretly buy political power and business influence. There is, as yet, no way of knowing. One thing is clear, however: the only way to begin to get answers is to see the president's tax returns, audited or not. Isn't it time to open that safe?

This article originally appeared on TomDispatch.

Nomi Prins is a TomDispatch regular. Her latest book is Collusion: How Central Bankers Rigged the World (Nation Books). Of her six other books, the most recent is All the Presidents' Bankers: The Hidden Alliances That Drive American Power. She is a former Wall Street executive. Special thanks go to researcher Craig Wilson for his superb work on this piece.
