

## **Paul Manafort's Ridiculous Lawsuit Against Robert Mueller Is a Pure Publicity Stunt**

### **Ukraine**

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**Former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, under indictment on a variety of charges in the United States, still has not convincingly explained just what he did to earn the USD 17 million + given to him by Viktor Yanukovich and Ukraine's Party of Regions. The only thing that appears certain is that Manafort's trial in a Washington area federal court could begin as early as May – unless he decides to cut a deal with the special counsel and then spend a lot of time explaining some things in detail before committees of the U.S. House and Senate.**

By Mark Joseph Stern for Slate, Jan 3, 2018: On Wednesday, Paul Manafort filed [a lawsuit](#) against the Department of Justice, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and special counsel Robert Mueller. In October, Mueller [indicted Manafort](#) on multiple counts of money laundering and failure to report foreign lobbying efforts; Manafort now argues that these indictments are illegal. His lawsuit is almost certain to fail. Indeed, it is so legally tenuous that it is best understood as a political statement meant to frame Manafort as a victim of unlawful prosecutorial overreach. The lawsuit centers around a challenge to Mueller's authority to investigate Manafort. Following Attorney General Jeff Sessions's [recusal](#) from investigations regarding the 2016 campaign, Rosenstein appointed Mueller to investigate possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Rosenstein's order also licensed Mueller to look into "any matters that arose or may arise directly from" that investigation. Manafort claims that this provision strays too far from the Department of Justice regulations that govern the special counsel, which require Rosenstein to provide "a specific factual statement" of "the matter to be investigated." In short, Manafort asserts that Rosenstein's order did not sufficiently specify what Mueller could—and could not—investigate. He also alleges that, even if the order were lawful, Mueller has indicted Manafort for alleged crimes that were too far removed from the Russia investigation. (None of Manafort's alleged misdeeds have directly tied back to Russian collusion so far as we know yet, though of course Mueller could be withholding some information.) Thus, Manafort argues, the indictments exceeded Mueller's authority and must be tossed out. These claims are quite weak. The regulations in question do not require the "specific factual statement" of the special counsel's purview to be a *narrow* one. They simply require Rosenstein to explain what matters Mueller must investigate. Rosenstein did precisely that, ordering Mueller to investigate "any links and/or coordination" between the Russian government and Trump's campaign, as well as "any matters that arose or may arise directly from" his investigation. Pursuant to this order, Mueller indicted Manafort—a key player in the Trump campaign [who helped to elect](#) a pro-Russian president in Ukraine—on financial crimes. Rosenstein's order may be broad, and Mueller's indictment of Manafort may lack an explicit link to Russian collusion right now. But both clearly comport with the relevant regulations. [hellip;] <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/01/03/paul-manafort-lawsuit-against-robert-mueller/>