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Opinion

Opinion: Rudy, Rudy, what happened to you?

By Edward L. Marcus
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Photo: Getty Images; Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani speaks during a conference in Manza, Albania.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Rudy Giuliani was kind of a folk hero. He had stood up to the mafia and then he stood up for America.

Now Giuliani is a shell of the man he once was — trying to sell his Trump contacts to the highest bidder without any evident concern for the consequences.

Good ol' Rudy is right in the middle of the Trump impeachment. The details surrounding his shenanigans appear as if they will be the final nails in Trump's impeachment coffin.

Just look at the allegations against Rudy. All appear based on fact.

First, there is an ongoing criminal investigation in Rudy's role in the removal of Marie L. Yovanovitch, the former American ambassador to Ukraine. Those same investigations are checking whether Giuliani sought to influence the U.S. government on behalf of a foreign government, Ukraine. Giuliani did not register as a foreign agent, and that is against the law. His apparent defense, acting as Trump's lawyer, will not hold up.

Next, two of Giuliani's associates, the Russians Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, have been arrested for serious campaign finance violations. They pleaded not guilty but we have yet to hear any sworn testimony from either of them — testimony that could very well sink Rudy.

And there are documents from as far back as February that show Giuliani intended to represent Yovany Lutsenko, Ukraine's top prosecutor at one time, and/or the Ukraine government. He sought a retainer of \$200,000 from Lutsenko and a \$300,000 retainer from the Ukrainian government.

To be fair, neither retainer paid, although the agreement seemingly included the stipulations that Rudy would arrange a meeting between Lutsenko and U.S. Attorney General William Barr and/or Trump. That's real pay-to-play that you would expect to see in mobster movies. Rudy says he decided it would have been a conflict of interest to proceed, although there have been statements that Lutsenko refused to pay for just a meeting.

There was another group of attorneys brought in to the scandal by Giuliani. However, while agreements were drafted it does not, so far, appear money was paid. Giuliani went to close friends, the law firm of Toensing and DiGenova, a husband-and-wife team Rudy briefly brought

in to represent Trump. They evidently were looking for a retainer of \$25,000 a month from Viktor Shokin, Lutsenko's predecessor.

In an interview on Nov. 26 with conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly, Trump said that he had not directed Giuliani to do anything in Ukraine. When O'Reilly asked what Rudy was doing for him (Trump), Trump said, "You have to ask Rudy."

When Rudy was interviewed, he said that if Trump were going to throw him under the bus, he had "insurance." Rudy later said he meant that statement as a joke. I don't think so.

The problem is that Rudy has become a joke, a laughingstock, someone that no one would want as an attorney.

I do not know what will happen to Rudy ultimately, but my guess would be that he will be indicted and eventually disbarred.

I do know that Rudy's escapades will affect the Trump impeachment in a major way.

Trump will throw Rudy under the bus in a New York minute, given the chance and the need. Everything Rudy has done with Ukraine and elsewhere will be a significant contribution to Trump being impeached and standing trial in the Senate. With Giuliani, Trump doesn't need enemies. His "friends" will do him in, although the truth is, he doesn't need much help. He has done himself in with his public statements and actions.

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