



**UPDATED REPORT**

# **James Comer's 9 Months of Abject Failure**

September 2023

**CONGRESSIONAL  
INTEGRITY   
PROJECT **



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# James Comer's 9 Months of Abject Failure

*James Comer has been investigating President Biden for nearly a year now. After countless political stunts, dozens of hearings, transcribed interviews, and memos, and despite hours on Fox peddling conspiracy theories, Comer and his MAGA crew have failed to find a single shred of evidence linking President Biden to any of their lurid accusations. In fact, Republicans have been forced to walk back claim after claim.*

*After weathering nine months of complete and utter failure while members of Comer's own caucus have publicly expressed disdain at the glaring lack of evidence, MAGA Republicans are moving forward with an impeachment inquiry against President Biden without even a veneer of direct evidence to support their lurid claims.*

*As Kevin McCarthy, James Comer, and Jim Jordan launch a baseless impeachment inquiry into President Biden with the threat of an imminent government shutdown looming, let's take a quick trip down memory lane of just some of Comer's face plants, walk backs, and failed accusations over the past nine months.*

### **September 2023: Comer's Own Republican Colleagues Continue To Dispute His Baseless Impeachment Inquiry Claims.**

Even members of Comer's own caucus know that baseless investigations into President Biden and his family have not produced a shred of evidence to warrant an impeachment inquiry, and several have come out publicly to say they do not support it:

- **Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX): "We Don't Have The Evidence."** [Fox News, 9/17/23, [VIDEO](#)]
- **Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO): "What's Missing, Despite Years of Investigation, Is The Smoking Gun."** [Washington Post, [9/15/23](#)]
- **Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA): The Evidence "Has Yet To Be Discovered."** [CNN, [9/14/23](#)]

- **Rep. Don Bacon “You Should Have Some Kind Of Direct Evidence” Before Launching An Impeachment Inquiry.** [The Hill, [9/12/23](#)]
- **Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH): I’m “Not Seeing Facts Or Evidence At This Point” To Support An Impeachment Inquiry.** [Forbes, [9/11/23](#)]
- **Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD): “I Have Not Seen That Evidence” To Support Impeachment.** [CNN, [9/11/23](#)]
- **Rep. French Hill (R-AR): I Don’t Believe House Republicans Have “Even Remotely Completed Their Work,” Shouldn’t “Prematurely” Move To Impeach Biden.** [“Face the Nation,” CBS, [9/10/23](#), [VIDEO](#)]

### **September 2023: Still MAGA & Extreme: Comer Spends His Time Spewing Conspiracy Theories Instead of Governing.**

While fellow House Republicans tried (and failed) to [initiate debate](#) on spending bills ahead of an impending shutdown deadline, Comer [missed](#) a key vote to fund the government to spew lies on Fox News. Instead of addressing the top issues facing his constituents, Comer spends his time furthering conspiracy theories and even [retweeted QAnon content](#).

- **September 2023: A Former Ukrainian President Refuted Comer’s Outlandish Claim That U.S. Support For the War In Ukraine Was Rooted In A “Conflict of Interest” Stemming From Hunter Biden’s Business in the County.**

In July, Comer [spread a conspiracy theory](#) on Newsmax about ongoing U.S. support for Ukraine throughout the Russian invasion, claiming that the Biden administration’s support represents a so-called conflict of interest supposedly stemming from then-Vice President Biden’s efforts to fire a corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor back in 2015.

In September, former Ukrainian Poroshenko himself [refuted](#) Comer’s allegations during a Fox News interview, and condemned the conspiracy theory as false, calling the corrupt prosecutor a “completely crazy person,” and said, "there's something wrong with him.” The allegation is based on Comer’s long-debunked claim that the former Vice President was working to fire the prosecutor in order to benefit Hunter Biden’s business in Ukraine. But [numerous fact checkers](#) have found no evidence to support this, and the House Foreign Affairs Committee [found](#) that [official U.S. policy supported removing Shokin](#) at the time – as did [many European officials](#), [Republicans in Congress](#) at the time, and international anti-corruptions organizations.





### **September 2023: Comer's Claims That The Office of the Vice President Colluded With Hunter Biden Backfired When The Actual "Evidence" Was Revealed.**

In September, Oversight Republicans claimed that the Office of the Vice President colluded with Hunter Biden's business partner on media responses, and Comer [sent a letter](#) to the National Archives demanding documents related to media outrage. Contrary to Comer's claims that Hunter Biden's business partners wanted to be seen as having the support of the White House, however, the key email in question included a statement [explicitly stating](#) that the Vice President "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Comer then took to right-wing media to claim that the National Archives was "[obstructing](#)" oversight. During a radio interview with Republican billionaire John Catsimatidis, Comer [claimed](#) that "the National Archives is preventing us from having...specific Biden correspondence." Comer's Democratic colleagues quickly disproved this, however, revealing that the National Archivist sent Comer and Oversight Republicans a letter acknowledging the request and outlining the steps required by law to fulfill it.

### **September 2023: Comer Failed To Produce Evidence Of \$10 Million So-Called Bribe Supposedly Laundered Through Shell Companies While Joe Biden Was Not In Office.**

Comer has suggested that the Biden family used 21 so-called shell companies to launder money, claiming that they served no legitimate business function. But, as Washington Post fact-checkers [reported](#), "that claim is undercut by the list of 21 companies that appear in the second staff memo. **Virtually all of the companies (many of which now are defunct) had legitimate business interests.** Others had clearly identified business investments. Digging through the records, we find only three whose business purpose remains vague; one (Rosemont Seneca Global Risk Services, LLC) may not even be related to Hunter Biden, according to an email found in Hunter Biden's laptop. The memos do not list any payments that flowed through these three companies. [...] Archer, in his interview, said he did not know if that was the case, but he insisted that Baturina was a Rosemont Realty client not connected to Hunter Biden. The staff memo, released after the Archer interview, [ignores](#) that comment."

In late September, Comer announced he would [subpoena](#) records linked to Joe Biden's corporation from 2017 – a year in which the former Vice President spent just 20 days in office. During a Fox News interview, Comer [claimed](#) that if debunked bribery allegations are true, Joe Biden supposedly funneled \$10 million through an "LLC that he supposedly use to receive speaking fees and to sell his book, while the speaking fees in his book don't add up to what the total was that he disclosed on his taxes." **Comer himself admitted during the interview, "we've pretty much gotten just about all the bank records from the shell**



**companies,”** and he has failed to produce any direct evidence linking the supposed bribery money to the former Vice President’s LLC.

Further, USAToday fact-checkers [found](#) that much of Biden’s income after serving as Vice President **was “gained through public speaking events and book deals,” and “is traceable and not uncommon for someone in Biden’s position. Biden has made public his tax returns from the past 22 years, leaving little room for speculation.”** Of the \$10 million in question, the Biden household received [less than \\$800,000](#) in flow-through income from the LLC, as was reported on his personal income tax return. Leaving LLC income uncategorized in personal tax returns is standard practice – even far-right Breitbart News commentators [noted](#), “It is apparently common for personal tax returns to not list line item income of S Corporations entities, according to Jerry Allison, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) of Allison Financial Services who practiced accounting for more than 30 years.”

### **September 2023: Comer Has Found Absolutely Nothing From Emails Dating Back To Joe Biden’s Vice Presidency.**

Comer has made emails from Joe Biden’s vice presidency a [key target](#) of his investigation, speculating that they contain [“pretty damning evidence.”](#) Last week, however, when the National Archives briefed House Oversight Republicans, the first batch of emails [revealed](#) nothing of the sort. Instead, the first set of emails were about, “Biden family scheduling; a humorous exchange about Biden’s status as a ‘new Georgian sex symbol’; and praise from the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine for Joe Biden’s other son, Beau, who has since died.”

As Politico [noted](#), “Yet the emails are **another example of the House GOP failing to turn up evidence they’ve assured the public exists and that will implicate Biden** in some form of corruption that rises to an impeachable offense.” The Washington Post similarly [reported](#), “...Thursday’s episode provided the latest example of documents and testimony that House Republicans chased down only to discover they did not substantiate allegations that Biden benefited from Hunter’s business dealings or used his office to assist them.”

### **August – September 2023: Fact Checkers Debunked Comer’s False Claims That President Biden’s Use of An Email Pseudonym Was “Code” To Communicate With Hunter Biden’s Business Partners.**

Comer has long pushed a false narrative that a Ukrainian prosecutor was removed at then-Vice President Biden’s behest as a favor to Hunter Biden, and [recently claimed](#) that the former VP used an email pseudonym to send a secret message to his son about how he was going to tell the Ukrainian president to fire the prosecutor in question.

But as Washington Post fact-checkers [concluded](#), “As for the use of a pseudonym, it’s no surprise Biden would have had one, as it was disclosed during the Obama presidency that senior officials had such accounts. [...] **Comer has a tendency to mess up details or lose nuance when he shows up on television, but he really shoots himself in the foot here.** He claims that Biden was sending a secret message to his son about how he was going to tell the Ukrainian president to fire the prosecutor — but the email was sent two months after the firing. Skeptics may doubt whether Hunter Biden was copied on the email for family matters, but it’s certainly not because of the nefarious purpose suggested by Comer.”

### **August – September 2023: Comer’s Much-Hyped IRS Whistleblowers’ Claims About So-Called Interference With An Investigation Into Hunter Biden Have Completely Failed.**

James Comer’s key IRS whistleblower allegations have been debunked by [at least six other witnesses](#) brought in for questioning by Oversight Republicans – including whistleblower Gary Shapley’s supervisor at the IRS’ Criminal Investigation division and the division’s director of field operations, three current and former FBI officials, and a longtime bookkeeper for the Biden family. These **top agents and officials have testified that the whistleblower allegations are “false and misleading” and that they “don’t remember” key parts of Shapley’s account.** None of the officials and agents present at the same meetings as Shapley ever remembered hearing US Attorney David Weiss ever say that he lacked the authority to decide whether to bring charges against the president’s son, nor did they remember hearing Weiss say that he had been denied a request for special counsel status. **Shapley’s supervisor also testified he recommended removing him from the Hunter Biden probe “to protect the integrity of the investigation” because he made “unsubstantiated allegations.”**

### **August 2023: Comer’s Fundraising Has Skyrocketed During His High-Profile Role As Oversight Chair.**

Since becoming chair of the GOP House Oversight Committee and spearheading a multitude of investigations targeting President Biden, Comer has fundraised well above his past sums: “It’s been a consequential eight months for Comer, who took over as committee chairman after Republicans flipped the House and has been using that power to bludgeon Biden, accusing him of being corrupt. And Comer’s fundraising has reflected that newfound prominence. **The Kentucky Republican has raised \$1 million so far the first six months of 2023,** including \$400,000 in unitemized contributions (money raised from people who gave less than \$200). **He’s operating on a completely different scale than just a few years ago.** Comer raised only \$15,000 from small-dollar donors over the entire two-year period from 2021 through 2022. And at this point on the calendar last election cycle, through the second quarter of 2021, he had raised just \$5,050 from those small contributors.” [NBC News, [8/31/23](#)]

### **August 2023: “Less Than A Phantom:” Comer’s Latest Report Produced No Evidence of A Bribe.**

In early-August Comer released a new memo, “Third Bank Records Memorandum from the Oversight Committee’s Investigation into the Biden Family’s Influence Peddling and Business Schemes,” attacking the President for supposedly receiving bribes from foreign countries.

Unfortunately for Comer, the memo was a [belly-flop with no evidence and no new information](#). POLITICO [reported](#): “But the memo, the third Comer has released so far this year, also doesn’t show a direct payment to Joe Biden.” A Washington Post [analysis](#) also summarized Comer’s fishing expedition after the latest memo: “After three months, a period that clearly included more assessments of income received by Hunter Biden (though a lot of the \$20 million was already reported), there’s not a whiff of the alleged \$5 million paid to Joe Biden by Zlochevsky. It’s less than a phantom.” And the New Republic [fact-checked](#) the timeline of alleged corruption and found it to be “riddled with errors:” “they have yet to produce any actual evidence of their claims, and the latest attempt to make their case is no better. Instead, it simply shows their desperation to discredit the president.”

### **July 2023: Comer’s Supposed Star Witness Fails To Prove That President Biden Did Anything Wrong.**

In late July 2023, the day before Trump was indicted for a third time on charges related to the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol in 2021, a business associate of Hunter Biden appeared before the Oversight Committee to testify at the invitation of James Comer. For [weeks in advance](#), Comer hyped the upcoming interview as [bombshell testimony](#) and declared the testimony [evidence of a quid pro quo](#).

But Archer’s testimony failed to produce a shred of evidence of a single conflict of interest of President Biden ever doing anything in connection or in relation to Hunter Biden’s business ventures. As [ABC](#) reported: “Archer testified that Joe Biden’s interactions with Hunter Biden’s associates were ‘not related to commercial business,’ that Joe Biden had no involvement with Burisma, the Ukrainian oil conglomerate on whose board both Archer and Hunter Biden served; that the elder Biden never took any actions to benefit Burisma or Hunter Biden; and that Hunter Biden never asked his father to take any actions that would help his clients, according to the fully transcribed interview with the committee.”

Comer also hyped a portion of testimony by Hunter Biden’s business associate Devon Archer suggesting that Joe Biden supposedly [joined](#) Hunter on speakerphone while speaking with business associates up to 20 times. The reality, however, was that Archer’s testimony referred to approximately 20 instances [over the span of a decade](#) in which Hunter indicated Joe Biden was

merely present; Archer did not testify that President Biden was directly involved in business discussions beyond “the brand” – only that he held casual conversations about “the weather” and “fishing.”

- **Comer Lied About Skipping The So-Called Bombshell Testimony That Contradicted His Unsubstantiated Allegations About President Biden.** Comer himself could not be bothered to show up for Archer’s testimony despite [hyping](#) the upcoming interview for [weeks in advance](#), Comer hyped the upcoming interview as bombshell testimony. Yet even Oversight committee staffers were [unwilling to cover](#) for Comer’s lies, refusing to say if Comer phoned-in and saying he was in “constant contact” with staff during the interview. One GOP source even [said](#), “It was like following a general into battle, but the general decided to stay home instead of fight.”

### **July 2023: Comer’s Top Whistleblowers Testified That There’s No Evidence President Biden Interfered In IRS/DOJ Investigations Into Hunter Biden.**

James Comer has spent more than six months hyping up two IRS whistleblowers that claim to have damning evidence about interference in Hunter Biden investigations. Despite their lofty claims, these two IRS whistleblowers – Gary Shapley and Joseph Ziegler – **[themselves testified, under oath, that neither President Biden nor his Attorney General interfered](#)** in the Internal Revenue Service and Department of Justice’s investigation into Hunter Biden.

### **May – July 2023: Comer and Grassley Failed To Produce Evidence of Bribery After Subpoenaing the FBI & Risking The Safety of Confidential Sources.**

In early-May, Comer and Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) published an open letter to the FBI announcing [subpoenas](#) for an unclassified document supposedly describing an alleged “criminal scheme involving then-Vice President Biden and a foreign national relating to the exchange of money for policy decisions.” Comer was immediately called out for pushing unsubstantiated allegations in the letter. The Associated Press [noted](#), “the lawmakers used the word ‘alleged’ three times in the opening paragraph of the letter and offered no evidence of the veracity of the accusations.” HuffPost reporters [concurred](#): “[Republicans] acknowledged they don’t know if the allegation will pan out. [...] backing the allegation despite the scarcity of details.”

When Comer and Grassley obtained the document, form FD-1023, and publicly released a redacted version in July – against the advice of intelligence officials who feared it would “unnecessarily risks the safety of a confidential source” – it ended up being an [uncorroborated FBI tip. Worse still, the owner of Ukrainian energy firm Burisma, had already rebutted the uncorroborated bribery allegations back in 2019](#): “As part of the impeachment inquiry against then-President Trump, Congress learned that Mr. Zlochevsky, the



Ukrainian oligarch and the owner of Burisma, whom Republican Committee Members appear to have identified as the source of the allegations memorialized in the Form FD-1023, squarely rebutted these allegations in 2019.”

**June 2023: Comer Repeatedly Claimed That Bribery Allegations Had Nothing To Do With Giuliani. Oops– Rudy Says It Was All Him.**

In [interview](#) after [interview](#) with friendly right-wing hosts, James Comer claimed that supposed bribery allegations against Joe Biden have [nothing to do with](#) disgraced Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani. The only problem with Comer’s vehement statements? They are not true. Rudy Giuliani himself has taken credit for first raising the allegations. **[Giuliani has said during several Newsmax TV appearances that he alerted the Justice Department to the allegation.](#)** “The document they’re talking about, the \$10 million bribe from Mykola Zlochevsky, it really is the tip of the iceberg,” Giuliani said on Newsmax on June 10. “That document was discovered because it was at least one FBI agent that went out and tried to corroborate what I gave them.”

**June 2023: Comer Hyped So-Called Bribery Tapes. He Later Admitted... Not Knowing If They “Really Exist.”**

On June 8, 2023, former President Trump was charged with violating the Espionage Act and obstructing justice in an ongoing investigation related to classified documents, and was indicted in federal court in Florida. Just days later – surely a coincidence! – GOP Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Comer began hyping the potential existence of [audio tapes](#) supposedly proving President Biden accepted a \$5 million bribe from a Ukrainian energy company during the Obama administration. Yet despite hyping these claims for weeks on end, **[Comer later admitted, “we don’t know if they are legit or not” during a Newsmax interview just five days later.](#)**

**June – August 2023: Comer Falsely Claimed that the Biden Family Took More than \$20 Million from Foreign Nations.**

For months, Comer has claimed that President Biden and his family took in \$20 million from foreign sources. In June 2023, Comer took to Fox News at least twice to claim that the number would [“exceed \\$20 million”](#) or [“top out at \\$20 million plus.”](#) In July 2023, he claimed on [Ted Cruz’s podcast](#) it takes “probably \$20 million” to buy a U.S. President, later noting “I feel like we’ll be able to hit the \$25 million mark [from foreign nations to Joe Biden and family].” On Fox News, he [claimed](#): “we think that we can find around \$20 million to \$30 million.” In August 2023, he doubled down on those allegations, claiming directly that they “recieve[d] over \$20 million [illegally from foreign nationals](#)” and [“our enemies](#) around the world.” He also [claimed](#) that they “never paid a penny of taxes.” **[But the evidence shows otherwise; according to the Washington Post, “A close reading of the memos, however, finds that only](#)**

about \$7 million can be directly attributed to Biden family members, mostly Hunter, while the rest went to ‘associates,’ according to the memos.”

### **April & May 2023: Comer’s Second Bank Memo Failed To Produce Evidence Linking President Biden To Outlandish Claims.**

In May 2023, Comer and Oversight Republicans published their [second bank memo](#) attacking the President on supposed foreign business ties. As POLITICO [reported](#), “even as Republicans continue to rhetorically circle around Biden, much of the investigative effort they revealed on Wednesday centered around a network of businesses related to his family members and their associates. [...] [Oversight Republicans’ memo] also doesn’t show any way Biden’s decisions were influenced by those agreements or that he had direct knowledge of them. **And while Republicans have criticized the payments as questionable, they stopped short of calling any of the activity potentially illegal.**”

Even conservative critics called out Comer’s lack of evidence backing the memo, with Fox News host Steve Doocy [pushing back](#) during an interview with Comer: “That’s just your suggestion. You don’t actually have any facts to that point. You’ve got some circumstantial evidence. And the other thing is, of all those names, the one person who didn’t profit is that — there’s no evidence that Joe Biden did anything illegally.”

### **April 2023: James Comer Blatantly Misrepresented Whistleblowers, Then Refused to Produce Evidence Substantiating His Claims.**

For months, Comer talked to the press about four individuals he [claimed](#) were “whistleblowers.” Problem is – they weren’t whistleblowers and there were only two people. As Ranking Member Raskin wrote to Comer in a letter obtained by [the Washington Post](#): “The two individuals your staff specifically identified as the individuals they understood to have been referenced during your March 6 Fox News interview, are not whistleblowers... your repeated statements about ‘four people’ suggest that either you have intentionally misrepresented the Committee’s investigative progress to your conservative audience or that key investigative steps have been deliberately withheld from Committee Democrats.”

- **Comer Invoked ‘Deep State’ Conspiracies Dozens of Times In Interviews, Claiming His Various Whistleblowers “Fear For Their Lives” From Biden Family & Unnamed Rogue Government Actors.** “As I said on Fox, [whistleblowers] fear for their lives, not just from the Biden family, from rogue intelligence people within our government.” [Brian Kilmeade Show, [5/1/23](#)]

### **February 2023: In His First Oversight Hearing, Comer Pushed a “Factually Unsupported Narrative” About The ‘Twitter Files’.**

After one of the GOP House Oversight Committee’s first hearings, Chairman Comer got called out for pushing “a [factually unsupported narrative](#) about the federal government secretly colluding with Twitter,” despite “no real evidence to support this weighty and consequential claim.” During House Oversight’s first hearing, former Twitter Deputy General Counsel James Baker – one of the Republicans’ own witnesses – [told](#) the committee, “I am aware of [no unlawful collusion](#) with, or direction from, any government agency or political campaign on how Twitter should have handled the Hunter Biden laptop situation.”

Even ‘Twitter Files’ author Matt Taibbi (who testified in front of a separate committee hearing in March) could not substantiate Comer’s claims: “[there is no evidence](#) – that I’ve seen – of any government involvement in the laptop story.

### **December 2022: Comer Falsely Claimed ‘Twitter Files’ Showed Evidence Of So-Called Collusion on Fox News. They Didn’t.**

Shortly after Elon Musk acquired Twitter, he hand-picked a group of right-wing journalists to release a carefully-curated cache of internal documents. After some of the documents were released, Comer took to Fox News to claim that Musk’s ‘Twitter Files’ [contained “evidence”](#) that President Biden’s campaign supposedly “colluded” with Big Tech. But the evidence wasn’t there: “The unsupported claim [...], of course, is not what the selectively released company documents show.”

### **November 2022: During His First Press Conference, Comer Said He Had “Evidence of Federal Crimes.” His Report Failed To Name A Single Crime.**

During his first press conference after Republicans won a House majority in November 2022, Comer declared: “Committee Republicans have uncovered evidence of federal crimes committed by, and to the benefit of, members of the president’s family.” But when he released a 31-page interim report, reporters noted that it [lacked evidence and declined to specify charges](#): “[the report] does not make specific allegations about the Biden family or their alleged crimes. Indeed, the report stops short of listing any of the specific crimes listed by Comer...it does, however, accuse the Biden family.”

### **October 2022: Fact Checkers Called Out Comer For “Need[ing] To Get His Facts Straight” On Hunter Biden Claims.**

Weeks before the 2022 midterm elections, Rep. Comer made [false and unsubstantiated claims](#) about President Biden’s family on Fox News: “Hunter Biden committed serious crimes, as you mentioned, 150 suspicious activity reports. [...] But yet the FBI did nothing about it.” Just days later, Comer got [called out by independent fact checkers](#) for lying to Americans about Hunter



Biden. An investigative reporter wrote that Comer “needs to get his facts straight” after making numerous false and/or unsubstantiated claims about foreign business dealings.