**Corruption in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)**

One bad egg stains the reputation of the FBI. And it was not a spy inserted into the Bureau, but Charles McGonigal, a long time counterintelligence officer who served his country for more than 20 years, then got greedy and took bribes from a sanctioned Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska who was known to the FBI and McGonigal to be connected with Russian intelligence. McGonigal, shortly before retirement traveled to Albania to meet the Albanian prime minister and arranged for his post retirement consulting business. Later, back home McGonigal received $80,000 loan which he had requested to fund his new business.

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**SOURCE:**

**Ex-FBI Agent Gets More Than Four Years in Jail**

 **By James Fanelli in New York and C. Ryan Barber, *The Wall Street Journal* | Page A003, 15 December 2023**

 **Charles McGonigal**

*In Washington* Charles McGonigal spent more than two decades as an FBI agent working on some of the country’s most important national-security and terrorism cases, including the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and ended up as the bureau’s chief spy hunter in New York.

He has since taken a humiliating fall, pleading guilty earlier this year to felonies in two separate cases, including violating U.S. sanctions by accepting secret payments from a Russian oligarch, a crime for which he was sentenced on Thursday to more than four years in prison.

The former G-man had hoped his law-enforcement triumphs would keep him out of prison. His lawyers had asked the New York federal judge overseeing the case for a non-incarceration sentence. “In those 22 years, Charlie did some truly remarkable things,” Meagan Maloney, one of his lawyers, said at the sentencing.

U.S. District Judge Jennifer Rearden said McGonigal “made profoundly important contributions to our government” but called his misconduct very serious with national-security implications.

He told the judge at the sentencing that he regretted his actions and that he had betrayed his family, friends and former colleagues.

“As a former FBI special agent, it causes me extreme mental, emotional and physical pain,” he said.

McGonigal was arrested and charged in January with taking money from sanctioned Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska to dig up dirt on a rival oligarch. He pleaded guilty to a conspiracy count earlier this year.

Federal prosecutors, who asked for a sentence of five years in prison, said McGonigal exploited one of the pre-eminent counterintelligence posts in the world to cultivate relationships that he could use when he left the Federal Bureau of Investigation to do security consulting.

The Justice Department also charged McGonigal in a separate case in Washington with concealing his relationship with a former employee of an Albanian intelligence agency. Prosecutors alleged McGonigal received more than $225,000 from that person and hid aspects of their relationship, which they said created a conflict of interest with his FBI duties. He pleaded guilty in that case, too, earlier this year and is set to be sentenced Feb. 16.

Prosecutors say the descent from top agent to federal convict began in the fall of 2017, while McGonigal was eyeing retirement from his final post as the New York office’s counterintelligence chief. He traveled to Albania that September and met with the country’s prime minister, a potentially valuable contact for the security-consulting business he planned to launch. As a token of his appreciation, McGonigal left the Albanian prime minister with swag: an FBI hat.

Days later, he traveled by car into Kosovo and again bestowed an FBI hat on a politician, prosecutors said. That trip had the purpose of collecting information not only for the FBI but also for McGonigal’s “own undisclosed personal business development plan,” prosecutors said.

Within weeks, in a parked car outside a New York restaurant, McGonigal received about $80,000 in cash from the former Albanian intelligence officer as part of a loan he had requested. He later filed a disclosure with the FBI of his September 2017 travel, but failed to mention that he met with the Albanian prime minister and the Kosovar politician.

McGonigal admitted to concealing his receipt of money and failing to disclose those meetings with foreign officials, in a statement of offense that documented instances in which he commingled his FBI duties with personal business interests.

In 2018, months before his retirement, McGonigal was introduced to an agent of Deripaska through Sergey Shestakov, a former Russian diplomat who later became a U.S. citizen and an interpreter for courts and government offices in New York City, prosecutors said. Shestakov, also charged in the New York case, has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors said McGonigal knew through then-classified email that Deripaska was associated with a Russian intelligence agency, but he continued to develop a relationship with the oligarch. After his retirement, McGonigal met with Deripaska in London and Vienna, helping connect the Russian to a law firm to aid him in his efforts to get off the U.S. sanctions list, according to prosecutors.

McGonigal was later hired to investigate Deripaska’s rival, Russian oligarch Vladimir Potanin. Prosecutors said McGonigal used a subcontractor to track down files pertaining to Potanin on the dark web.

He was negotiating a multimillion- dollar sale of those files when FBI agents seized his phone in late 2021, according to prosecutors, a vital moment in the probe that ultimately sealed his fate.