

Democrats, media silent over identification of CIA “whistleblower”

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Right-wing media sources have identified 33-year-old Eric Ciaramella, a career CIA analyst specializing in Ukraine and Russia, as the official who filed the “whistleblower” complaint that has become the pretext for House Democrats to launch an impeachment inquiry into President Trump.

Ciaramella was assigned to work at the White House in 2015, during the second term of Barack Obama, where he worked under then National Security Advisor Susan Rice as Ukraine director. He was held over for a time in the Trump administration, and eventually became personal aide to National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster before being sent back to the CIA in mid-2017, allegedly under suspicion of leaking anti-Trump material to the media.

The influential pro-Republican web site *Real Clear Politics* (RCP) published a report October 30 by its Real Clear Investigations unit, which named Ciaramella, a Connecticut-born registered Democrat. The story quoted former CIA analyst and Trump aide Fred Fleitz to this effect: “Everyone knows who he is. CNN knows. The *Washington Post* knows. The *New York Times* knows. Congress knows. The White House knows. Even the president knows who he is.”

The attorneys for the whistleblower, Mark Zaid and Andrew Bakaj, issued a statement declaring they could “neither confirm nor deny” that Ciaramella was their client. This is language virtually identical to that employed by the intelligence agencies themselves when one of their agents or informants has been identified publicly by the media or another government.

The RCP identification came in the course of a week when Republican congressmen appeared to be making special efforts to elicit information about the whistleblower from every witness who appeared behind closed doors before the House Intelligence Committee.

There were several occasions where the Democratic chair of the committee, Adam Schiff, directed witnesses not to answer questions that might assist in exposing the whistleblower’s identity.

Ciaramella’s name has been widely publicized by right-wing publications like the *Washington Examiner*, ultra-right talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh, and numerous Republican senators and congressmen. Senator Rand Paul, for example, tweeted the CIA analyst’s name to 2.4 million followers on Twitter.

Without further evidence, it is not completely certain that Ciaramella was the official who filed the complaint against Trump with Intelligence Community Inspector General Michael Atkinson.

His biography, as reported in the media, definitely conforms to the profile of the whistleblower: the son of a Hartford bank executive, he majored in East European studies at Yale, went on to postgraduate work in that field in Harvard, worked briefly at the World Bank, and then joined the CIA. He speaks Russian, Ukrainian and Arabic, and was sent by CIA Director John Brennan to work on the Ukraine desk in the White House, where he accompanied Vice President Joe Biden on several trips to Ukraine.

There is, moreover, a striking connection to the House Intelligence Committee. Two people who worked with Ciaramella at the National Security Council during that period, Abigail Grace and Sean Misko, now work at the House Intelligence Committee under Schiff. Misko was reportedly hired by Schiff in August 2019, the same month that the whistleblower allegedly consulted with “staff” at the committee—not directly with Schiff—before filing his complaint with the inspector general.

A possible reason for caution in accepting the identification of the whistleblower as conclusive is that

neither President Trump himself, nor his cheering section at Fox News, have yet made any reference to Ciaramella by name. Trump has confined himself to tweeting demands that the whistleblower come forward to testify in public, along with denunciations of him as a liar and Democratic partisan, but gave no indication that he had been identified.

But it is remarkable—and tends to reinforce the likelihood that Ciaramella is the whistleblower—that the anti-Trump media, including the bulk of the corporate-controlled newspapers and networks aligned with the Democratic Party and pushing the impeachment narrative, have refused to publish his name.

Publications like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have not even reported the fact that right-wing pro-Trump outlets claim to have discovered the identity of the whistleblower. Nor was this fact referred to on any of the five Sunday television interview programs on ABC, NBC, CNN, CBS and Fox.

The entire corporate media—including Fox in this case—is honoring the standing demand of the intelligence apparatus that its agents and operatives never be publicly named, even refusing to inform the American people that there are allegations, whether true or not, against a particular intelligence agent.

There was at least one sign that the campaign to expose the anonymous whistleblower was having an impact on the whistleblower himself. His attorney, Mark Zaid, said Sunday that his client was willing to answer in writing questions submitted directly by Republican congressmen, without going through Schiff or the Democratic majority on the House Intelligence Committee. This would be a less restrictive procedure than that adopted by the House of Representatives in a resolution passed Thursday morning, which gives Schiff effectively full control over the questioning.

The utter subservience of the congressional Democrats to the military-intelligence apparatus was summed up by Representative Peter Welch of Vermont, a member of the Intelligence Committee. “It turns out the deep state are deeply committed people in the military, deeply committed people in the intelligence community, deeply committed people in the State Department,” he told the *Washington Post*. “They’re coming forward to advocate for enduring democratic values.”

This formulation elevates the CIA, the greatest enemy of political liberty on the planet, organizer of military coups, assassinations and torture around the world for more than 70 years, to the status of guarantor of democratic rights for the American people. No more reactionary and, literally, counterrevolutionary, political perspective can be imagined.

According to the *Real Clear Politics* report that identified Ciaramella, this groveling before the CIA characterizes all the actions of the Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee. At several points, the agent’s name was mentioned in questions of witnesses, and these references are to be redacted before the transcripts of the committee hearings are made public this week or next.

The floating of Ciaramella’s name sets the stage for further political convulsions in Washington. The CIA itself could bring legal action against the publications and web sites that have identified him, although most legal protections apply only to covert agents, not analysts.

The House Intelligence Committee has scheduled a full round of closed-door hearings, perhaps its last week of such endeavors, but it is not clear whether the witnesses it has subpoenaed will appear. These include John Eisenberg, the White House attorney for the National Security Council, and former National Security Advisor John Bolton, now viewed by the Democrats as a potential “smoking gun” witness against Trump on the allegations that he withheld military aid from Ukraine to force that government to launch a public investigation into Joe and Hunter Biden.



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