

Ivanka Trump: Born to legitimize corruption and make the shoddy look cute

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<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-heffernan-ivanka-legitimizing-20180303-story.html>

On July 27, 2017, near the end of the one of the most compelling hearings yet on the Trump-Russia affair, *Senator Sheldon Whitehouse* (D-R.I.) offered an extraordinary insight. It shot through the proceedings like a comet.

"Corrupt kleptocrats and international criminals make themselves rich in criminality and corruption," he said. "Then at some point they need the legitimate world in order to protect and account for their stolen proceeds."

What? [Senator] Whitehouse sketched a new bipolar world order, in which the so-called legitimate world, which includes the United States, is not at war with, but rather deeply enmeshed in, the corrupt one, where governments are built on bribery, **kleptocracy**, electoral fraud, slush funds, legal plunder and nepotism.

[Senator] Whitehouse then addressed William F. Browder, the hedge funder turned global finance reformer, who was giving testimony on foreign-agent registry violations. "How good a job is the legitimate world doing about fencing off the corrupt world rather than facilitating it? "

Browder didn't mince words. "The legitimate world, and America in particular, are failing in an absolute way," he said. The corrupt "steal the money, commit their crimes and kill the people, and then come here in the legitimate world with the rule of law, with the property rights, and with all the protections and keep their money."

Crooks seeking legitimacy are not fenced out in America. The U.S. is teeming with enablers champing at the bit to serve rich thugs: lawyers, lobbyists, bankers, security firms, consultants and PR people.

Instructor's Note

People, corruption among the wealthy is yet another example of "class warfare." This newspaper article explains how one form of this type of class warfare works in a *capitalist democracy*. An important point to keep in mind: racism enables class warfare (in a country like this one). Question: What is class warfare? Look it up in the course glossary.

If it's the coverup and not the crime that will ultimately bring down the Trump syndicate, Ivanka may turn out to be the point person for its demise.

The enabler sector now boasts several household names. Among them are the lobbyist and onetime Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, who has been indicted for financial crimes; and Trump's favorite child, Ivanka, who holds an indeterminate public-facing position in the White House — or in real estate, or maybe fashion.

Oh, Ivanka. Her livelihood is as opaque as her full-coverage foundation, but she plays a critical role in her father's administration — and in the broader *danse macabre* of corruption and legitimacy.

The so-called first daughter proves that “laundering” applies to more than money. She washes and gilds just about everything she touches. Consider her warehouses upon warehouses of petroleum-based separates, many of them sewn for poverty pay in sweatshops. When you call this *schmatte smorgasboard* the Ivanka Trump Collection it does brisk business — if not on Rodeo Drive, then in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

She has the same magic touch with the multitudes of flesh-and-blood rogues who flock to her for redemption. It's Ivanka who first brought Gen. Michael “Lied to the FBI” Flynn into the administration, according to the New Yorker; she praised him for his “amazing loyalty” and offered him his choice of positions at a transition-team meeting. One person present said, “It was like Princess Ivanka had laid the sword on Flynn's shoulders and said, ‘Rise and go forth.’”

The laying on of that princess sword seems to be Ivanka's favorite pastime. In 2006, when she was 25, she toured Moscow with [Felix Sater](#), who in 1998 pleaded guilty to a \$40-million stock fraud scheme run by the Russian mafia. She also collaborated with the Soviet-born businessman Tamir Sapir, whose top aide in 2004 [pleaded guilty](#) to a racketeering conspiracy with the Gambino crime family.

It's impossible to keep track of all the gangsters Ivanka has palled around with. But what's truly damning are the shady real-estate projects she has made rise and go forth.

In 2006, she oversaw the development of the Trump Ocean Club International Hotel and Tower in Panama City. The project was connected to a Brazilian money launderer later arrested for fraud and forgery as well as a Russian investor who'd previously been jailed in Israel for kidnapping. On Wednesday, a dispute between Trump's company and the building's owner turned violent. The journalist Marcy Wheeler has suggested the fight concerns records that may show Ivanka knew the property was laundering money. Police in riot gear stormed the hotel that Ivanka once hyped as [“exemplary of the grandeur in which we like to enter a market.”](#)

Ivanka was also a ranking official on the Trump SoHo, which has since shed the name Trump. In 2010, as ProPublica and WNYC have reported, the Manhattan District

Attorney's office began building a criminal case against Ivanka and Donald Trump Jr. for using inflated sales figures to defraud prospective buyers. After receiving a visit from Trump family lawyer and campaign donor Marc Kasowitz, then-DA Cyrus Vance Jr. backed off.

Just Thursday, [CNN reported](#) that FBI counterintelligence officials are investigating another Trump real-estate deal, the 63-story Trump International Hotel and Tower in Vancouver, which opened after Trump became president.

Ivanka has been described as "point person" on the development, which features an Ivanka Trump-branded spa. No one yet knows why it caught the FBI's eye, but Ivanka's long-awaited top-secret security clearance may turn on what the agents find out.

When an organization exists not to build buildings but to brand them, its business is optics. And Ivanka has long window-dressed the Trump Organization's deals. She was born to make the shoddy look cute, to legitimize corruption.

And if it's the coverup and not the crime that will ultimately bring down the Trump syndicate, Ivanka may turn out to be the point person for its demise.

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