
POLITICS

Max Miller's Endless Wars

The Ohio congressman fabricated a wild story of death threats on Interstate 90 and casually destroyed the life of a constituent. It's one of many accusations Miller, now facing a spousal abuse scandal, has made throughout his career.



BY MAUREEN TKACIK

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Then-congressional candidate Max Miller speaks at a rally at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, April 23, 2022, in Delaware, Ohio. Joe Maiorana/AP Photo



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The wordless show of dissent that cost Dr. Feras Hamdan his job, a \$50,000 cash surety bond, hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees, and the better part of his sanity lasted all of 24 seconds.

It was June 19, 2025, the seventh day of the so-called “Twelve-Day War” between Israel and Iran and the first day of summer vacation, so traffic was sparse on Hamdan’s morning commute along Interstate 90 near Rocky River, Ohio, when at around 9:20 a.m. he noticed a black Dodge Ram that looked like a colleague’s truck. So he pulled up on its left side to see if his hunch was correct.

More from Maureen Tkacik

It was not. In fact, the face in the driver’s-side window belonged to one of his least favorite politicians. He couldn’t believe it. He searched his phone for a photo of a Palestinian flag and held it up to his passenger-side window for a few seconds and honked the horn, a tiny act of rebellion. Then he hit record:

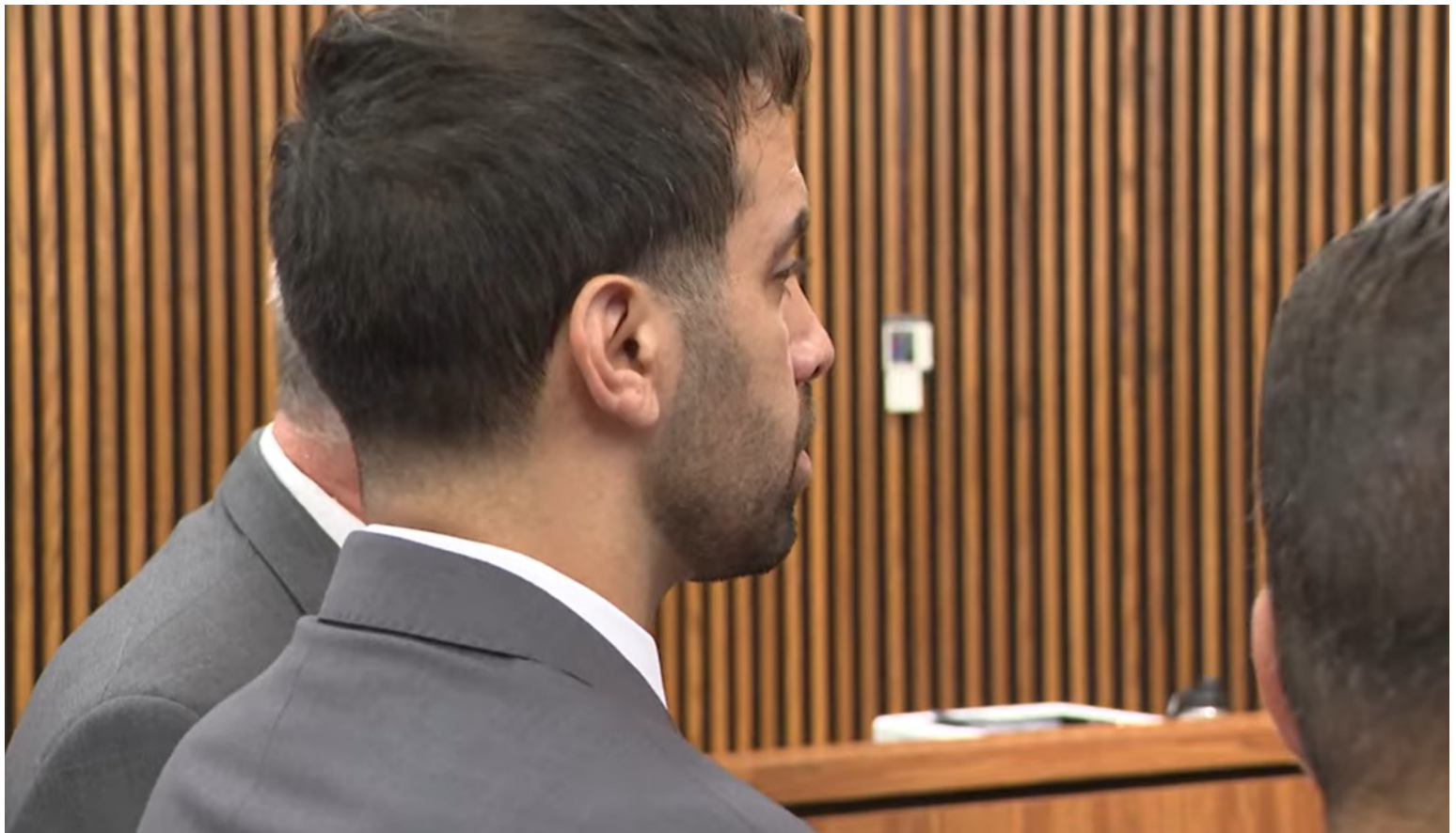
“This is the congressman, that piece of shit faggot congressman that’s against Filastin,” the physician narrated, using the Arabic word for Palestine, as he drove past a blurry-looking white guy. “That’s *craaazy*. This racist, Jewish ... he can’t even *look* at me!”

As Hamdan posted the video in a group chat of close friends, he realized Miller was tailing him, hard. **Traffic camera footage** suggests the Ram was no more than five or ten feet behind the black Tesla Hamdan was driving. The doctor recorded a voice note to send to the chat, then—fatefully—deleted the whole thing a few minutes later, embarrassed about having used the F-slur in the video. *This guy was chasing me through the streets, I’m pretty sure he called the cops on me and they’re looking for an Indian guy driving a black Tesla.*

Indeed, at 9:20 a.m. and 42 seconds, the congressman had been connected with a 911 dispatcher:

“My name is Congressman Max Miller, I’m on the freeway and I have somebody who has cut me off, who is flipping me off, who is showing me a Palestinian flag and is yelling [and] threatening to kill me ... and making gestures at me ...” he said. “I am on 90 traveling past Wooster overpass ... and I’m a little shaken now considering I have death threats. And I mean, he’s a pro-Palestinian guy now ... this is insane ... how do I know I’m safe later today with my daughter?”

Suddenly, his tale was drowned out by blaring horns and unspecified noise. “Here, here, listen to him, listen to him, *listen to him!*” the congressman yelled at the dispatcher, who can be heard advising her supervisor that indeed, the young congressman was being audibly harassed. Sounding genuinely shaken, Miller continued: “He said he wanted to kill me and my daughter, verbatim ...” The dispatcher asked for his precise location, then apologized that she would need to transfer him to the neighboring municipality. Miller had started to lose patience. “Can you just track this guy down now?” To the other dispatcher, he said, “I was cut off by a man in a Tesla ... [who] then rolled down his window and said that I’m going to cut your throat and your daughter’s. And he said you’re a dirty Jew. I’m going to fucking kill you all. And I know who you are and where you live. And I followed him, and he rolled down his window, and I rolled down my window, so I could hear what he was saying ...”



Dr. Feras Hamdan at a court appearance in February 2026. Screenshot/WKYC Channel 3

Over the course of the chaotic five-minute 911 call, Miller had, Hamdan claims in court filings, concocted no fewer than ten lies about this silent interaction. The doctor had neither cut him off nor flipped him off. Hamdan had neither threatened to kill, nor cut the throat of, Miller or his daughter. Nor had he called anyone a “dirty Jew” or said anything about knowing where Miller lived. This was all abundantly obvious to anyone with a shred of common sense because the two men had been driving at highway speeds throughout the entirety of the interaction, so even if Hamdan *had* rolled down his window, Miller wouldn’t have been able to hear a damn thing he was saying, something Hamdan’s attorneys would ultimately retain an aerospace engineer to prove with the help of three state-of-the-art sound-level meters. Perhaps cognizant of the little hole in this story, the congressman then stopped his car in the middle of traffic by an exit ramp, inspiring random passengers to blare their horns at him, which Miller then successfully used to verify to the dispatcher the physician’s “road rage.”

But Miller wasn’t done. “Today I was run off the road in Rocky River, and the life of me and my family was threatened by a person who proceeded to throw a Palestinian flag out the window of their vehicle before taking off,” he wrote in an X post he would later edit to leave out the flag-chucking detail; the original post was entered into evidence with the court. Interviewed by Rocky River police, Miller added another flourish: While “screaming at the top of his lungs,” Hamdan had promised to “turn my house into a parking lot.” The lie referenced a true quote of Miller’s from an interview he had given two years earlier, one of countless bloodthirsty comments that had won the congressman the special enmity of Greater Cleveland’s 14,000-strong Palestinian American population, which like Hamdan’s family largely migrated to the area from the Jerusalem suburb of Beit Hanina following its annexation by Israel after the 1967 war:

“I don’t even want to call it the Palestinian flag because they’re not a state, they’re a territory that’s about to probably be eviscerated and go away here shortly,” the then-freshman congressman had told Fox News on October 11, 2023, by which point Israel’s indiscriminate bombardment had already killed 1,200 and destroyed the homes of 340,000 Palestinians. “Because we’re gonna turn that into a parking lot.”

The actual parking lot of the Health Express Urgent Care in Parma, Ohio, began to fill with more than a dozen police cars not long after the confrontation. Four agencies—the Rocky River Police Department, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the U.S. Capitol Police, and the FBI—would ultimately investigate Miller’s accusations, combing the interstate for signs of the fictitious Palestinian flag Miller claimed the doctor had thrown out his window before he quietly retracted the accusation. At the clinic, Hamdan told police he had no interest in speaking to them without a lawyer present, so they drove to the home of his boss Dr.

Abdallah Ali, whose name was on the Tesla's registration, and hauled him down to the police station, where the congressman quickly identified him from a lineup as the man who had threatened to slit his throat. (Ali has a beard; Hamdan **did not**.)

Ali explained to detectives that he'd bought the Tesla for clinicians to travel between the ten outposts of his urgent care practice, and one of his doctors had been using it that week. Hamdan and his lawyer Issa Elkhatib, a childhood friend from Lakewood via Beit Hanina, drove to the station that evening to surrender. He deleted the short video he'd filmed, and some text messages in which he had sent the video to friends. The detectives eventually recovered the video he'd sent to friends, and argued that this constituted tampering with evidence, which added a second felony alongside felony ethnic intimidation to his **four-count indictment**.

A prosecutor told Elkhatib before his arraignment hearing that they were asking the judge to set the doctor's bail at around \$25,000. But Judge Joseph T. Burke had other ideas, and set bail at \$500,000, an amount typically reserved for suspects charged with extremely violent felonies or considered serious flight risks. "You could just hear the air sucked out of the room when he said it," Elkhatib remembers. It would take until the following Tuesday for Hamdan's extended family to come up with \$50,000 cash. But Juneteenth weekend in county jail wasn't so bad, the doctor reported. The cops let his wife bring food and a pillow. They kept quiet when he needed to pray. When Hamdan was finally released, he took a brief tour of the jail and thanked everyone. "They were all so friendly," he marveled to Elkhatib.

JUST OVER A DECADE AGO, Max Miller was working at Lululemon, training a weekend a month with the Marine Corps Reserve and trying to figure out to do with the Cleveland State University history degree he'd just obtained on the six-year plan; "the quintessential failson," in the words of an constituent who grew up in his affluent Cleveland suburban social circle and has met Miller in social settings. Today, he represents Ohio's Seventh District—with assignments on the powerful Ways and Means and Foreign Affairs Committees—actively trades stocks, and frequently appears on CNN, which devoted an extensive discussion on its Saturday morning show last year to Dr. Hamdan's purported attack, but until this summer had never grilled the congressman on the years-old allegations that he had assaulted three different women, most recently his ex-wife and the daughter of Ohio's junior senator Bernie Moreno.

What has not changed about Max Miller is his sense of impunity. "He would get in trouble and just—nothing ever seemed to happen," a former Shaker Heights High School classmate and baseball teammate of Miller's told Politico in 2021 for a **story** that documented no fewer than four arrests between ages 18 and 22 on criminal charges—including assault, resisting

arrest, and operating a vehicle while impaired—that Miller and his lawyers either got expunged from his record or substantially downgraded. More than 60 interviewees marveled at Miller's imperviousness to accountability.



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Of course, he hailed from a family one local publication dubbed “Cleveland Jewish royalty”; his grandfather Sam had helmed the iconic Ohio real estate development dynasty Forest City Enterprises at the height of its relevance, served as one of the country's highest-profile emissaries between American Jewry and the Vatican, and sired many ambitious and distinguished children. In a community with no shortage of affluence and achievement, the defining quality most of his peers associated with the otherwise unremarkable Max Miller was the shocking consistency with which “he gets away with stuff,” in the words of one. “He doesn't pay consequences for the things he does,” added another. This is of course the defining quality of the Trump era, but it is worth an examination of how Miller perfected it.

Indeed, Politico's detailed, rigorously sourced accounts of Miller pushing a girl down his stairway at a high school party and slapping his ex-girlfriend as a staffer in the first Trump White House had no discernible impact on his first congressional campaign in 2022, and allegations made by his then-wife two years later in a court filing that she had secretly purchased a house because she feared for the safety of herself and her infant daughter when in the company of Miller, whom she accused of abusing unspecified drugs, had none on his re-election in 2024. His biggest patron in impunity is, of course, the Pardon King himself, Donald Trump, who acquired Miller in a package deal in 2016 when he poached Marco Rubio's deputy finance director Eli Miller, who had recommended his cousin for a job driving the Florida senator around Chicago the previous year. But Trump quickly came to see Miller almost as a surrogate son, in large part due to his innate talent for knowing just what nostalgic show tune at what precise moment—“Memory” from *Cats*, for example—would succeed at talking Trump off the ledge of an incipient meltdown. In those days, senior White House staffers would summon Trump's “Music Man” when the president became grouchy, “so [Miller] could check on the order of the songs.”

Impunity catapulted the Music Man to public office. When a handful of GOP congressmen voted to impeach Trump over January 6th, Miller was the first primary challenger he recruited to launch his 2022 vengeance tour, to challenge one of those impeachment voters,

former Ohio State wide receiver Anthony Gonzalez, who represented a northeast Ohio district just east of where Miller had grown up. By then, Miller was dating a fellow former Rubio staffer named Emily Moreno, whose father Bernie had been one of Gonzalez's maxed-out donors and was dipping his toe in a potential Senate run.

Bernie Moreno, a luxury car dealer and first-generation Colombian immigrant, was a classic Never Trumper with a **social media feed** full of Hitler analogies and jeers at the "mentally unstable" insurrectionists. But Trump had crushed Biden by more than eight points in Ohio in 2020, and the following March he traveled to the state for a fundraiser for Miller that doubled as a show of dominance one party insider described as "Hunger Games," excoriating the former state GOP chair for defending Gonzalez. By April 2021, Moreno, social media feed scrubbed, announced he was running for Senate; in May, the state GOP formally censured Gonzalez and urged him to resign; and in June, Miller and Moreno announced their engagement at a Trump rally at the Lorain County fairgrounds just west of Akron.

By September, Gonzalez had bowed out of the race, and Miller wired the first \$500,000 of what would be more than \$1.1 million in personal loans he would make to his congressional campaign. The following June, Bernie Moreno, who by then had bowed out of the 2022 Senate race in favor of JD Vance, with the understanding that he would enjoy Trump's endorsement the following cycle, gave his daughter away to Miller at Trump's Bedminster golf club in New Jersey, effectively launching the new MAGA Ohio dynasty that would behind the scenes devolve over the next four years into what Sen. Moreno last week **described** as "truly, the seventh level of Hell."

The details of that hellscape began to surface the summer before the 2024 election, when Miller filed for divorce exactly two years to the day of his wedding to Moreno. In what would become a strange pattern, it was the congressman who revealed via a family court filing that his wife had secretly moved out of the house with their infant daughter after accusing him of abusing drugs and saying she felt unsafe in his presence, claims he alleged she concocted as part of a ploy to "extort" him financially. Throughout the fall, as the Moreno clan waged the most expensive Senate campaign of all time, Miller's legal team continuously dribbled out divorce dirt, alleging his estranged wife was withholding their child, hiding assets from the marital estate, refusing to subject herself to psychiatric evaluation for mental illness, and using her father's campaign as an excuse to "stall" the divorce proceedings.

But the national media never really probed the matter until this May, when the *Daily Mail* published the **first** of what would become an avalanche of stories detailing Moreno's side of the allegations Miller's filings had hinted at, this time corroborated with **police interview recordings** detailing his abuse, **photos** of what Moreno alleges are Miller's hypodermic

needles, court transcripts referencing Miller's **possible expulsion from college** in relation to an alleged assault on a female student, **photos** of bruises and burns Moreno claims Miller inflicted during arguments, **text messages** documenting the congressman's penchant for "holding hostage" his daughter's cherished blue bunny following handovers, and even a **photo** of Miller grinning while holding a bag of weed gummies purported to contain 150 mg of THC apiece, an elephant-sized dose.

Yet virtually none of his House colleagues have commented on the allegations—Miller had to ask for his own ethics investigation of himself. Even Brian Poindexter, the Democrat, union ironworker, and father of three daughters *running against him* in November, **says he has no interest** in discussing the matter. ("Everybody knows Max Miller's issues," he **told Semafor**.)

Last week, Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH) became the first member of Congress to call for Miller to resign, while Rep. Sam Liccardo (D-CA) called for a formal ethics investigation. A few days later, Sen. Moreno, the father of the woman who told police Miller held a gun to her head and may have broken their toddler's collarbone, finally caved following a whole summer of mounting inquiries and **issued** his own emphatic statement demanding his son-in-law's resignation.



Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH) on Capitol Hill earlier this month. Francis Chung/POLITICO via AP Images

Miller has a well-documented zeal for deflecting from his own misdeeds by hurling dubious accusations at colleagues of all political persuasions. He once sued his ex-girlfriend Stephanie Grisham for defamation, even though she had never even mentioned his name in her *Washington Post* column about the Trump family's cold response to her teary revelations about her ex-boyfriend's conduct; this was eventually settled. This year, he sued Emily Moreno over media coverage of their divorce, in which she did not participate; this is ongoing and Moreno's lawyer has filed for a restraining order against Miller. And after his daughter sustained unspecified injuries to her thighs, vaginal area, and face, Miller took action against the day care center that reported the injuries to Emily Moreno and the department of children and family services, suing four of its employees for "brutalizing" his daughter and inflicting "battery and assault" as well as "physical and emotional abuse" on the baby, in addition to "negligence, recklessness and willful and wanton misconduct" that the complaint claimed are "supported by audio and video recordings" obtained by the county department of children and family services—but which it neither appended to the lawsuit nor described or summarized at all. (This case also settled out of court.)

Throughout his divorce and custody battle with Moreno, Miller has privately and publicly threatened to expose damaging information about her father, possibly related to an AdultFriendFinder profile linked to his old work email account that surfaced following a hack several years ago. “Take this however you want, everyone is going to get to know you better than your wife does,” Miller texted the senator on an unspecified occasion, as revealed in court filings. “Enjoy the ride brother, I wouldn’t have to do this if you could keep your lying daughter under control.”

Much of the time, though, Miller seems to hurl damaging (and generally spurious) allegations at his colleagues purely for the love of the game. Just weeks into his first term, Miller personally led charges to expel disgraced former Rep. George Santos (R-NY) from the legislature and a bid to remove Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) from the House Foreign Relations Committee over her 2021 statement that the Israel Defense Forces should be held accountable for “unthinkable atrocities.” A few months later, the rookie congressman got the communications director of Ohio Right To Life fired from her job for posting, “There’s no hope for any of us outside of having faith in Jesus Christ alone.” Then in November, Miller was first among his colleagues to introduce a bill formally censuring Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) for saying and refusing to condemn the phrase “from the river to the sea.” Finally, when a video leaked of a legislative aide to former Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) having sex in a hearing room the following month, Miller raced to accuse the same staffer of shouting “Free Palestine!” at him in the hallway while he was speaking with a reporter; the aide, Aidan Maese-Czeropski, responded in a social media statement (since erased but cited by NBC News) that he had never seen Rep. Miller in his life and had no idea why he would fabricate a confrontation with him.

IN THE END, DR. HAMDAN was vindicated by surveillance capitalism. The traffic camera footage showed Miller tailing his Tesla in menacing fashion, not the other way around, and an expert analysis of one of the Tesla’s data recorders showed that his window had remained closed throughout the entirety of the confrontation. None of the events Miller had described on the 911 call or his X post, none of the events which had elevated the doctor’s dirty look to felony-level “ethnic menacing,” had taken place. (Miller has disputed this.)

Even still, the first outside lawyer Hamdan and Elkhatib hired wanted him to plead *guilty* to some form of verbal assault. Despite losing his job with the urgent care provider, Hamdan was forced to shell out even more money to find a new lawyer, Peter **Pattakos**. (“I’m one of the seemingly very few established lawyers in this town who will defend the right of Palestinians to not be exterminated,” **Pattakos** told me.) The day they were set to go to trial, the prosecutor offered a deal too good to pass up: He’d drop the two felonies in favor of misdemeanor disorderly conduct and “obstructing official business” charges, sparing

Hamdan's medical license in the process. "That's the deal of the century!" Miller's longtime lawyer Larry Zukerman's law partner, Adam Brown, grouched at the sentencing, in a sentiment **Pattakos** proudly quoted in his press release on the case.

"Miller should of course be ashamed of himself, and so should the law enforcement officials who failed to scrutinize his transparent lies and instead rushed to treat Dr. Hamdan, a respected doctor with no criminal history, like the stereotypical brown-skinned 'terrorist,'" **Pattakos** wrote, adding a humorous aside about the award the county prosecutor had just given the detective on the case for his excellence in forensic analysis of cars, computers, and mobile phones. "Despite this ostensible expertise, Detective Asbury failed to pull readily available data from Dr. Hamdan's vehicle that proved Miller's facially incredibly accusations to be actually impossible."



Virtually none of Miller's House colleagues have commented on the allegation.

In light of the implosion of Graham Platner, the unusual suspects have leveled the usual grievances about hypocrisy and "double standards," somehow failing to grasp that Miller and the entire ideology or ethos he represents revolves around flaunting, reinforcing, and codifying his own insulation from any form of standards. As he once said to his ex-wife in a letter that was revealed in the court case, in a very rare moment of candor: "I'm just a fuck up and worthless."

Pattakos filed a defamation case against Miller on the physician's behalf the afternoon they secured the plea agreement, much to the outrage of certain individuals in the prosecutor's office. "Congressman Miller was gracious in permitting a plea that allowed Dr. Hamdan to keep his medical license," even though "deleted text messages obtained during a sweep of Hamdan's phone" were somehow incriminating, a prosecutor's spokesman told the local Fox affiliate. "This lawsuit may backfire and cost Dr. Hamdan the gift he was just given."

Sure enough, Miller filed a counterclaim to the physician's defamation case in April containing lengthy excerpts from several years of the physician's text message history Miller's lawyer had, remarkably, obtained through a basic public records request, including exchanges in which he urged a fellow Palestinian American not to rejoice in the events of

October 7, in part because he suspected the breach to be at least partially “intentional”—an opinion **famously expressed** by the late Charlie Kirk the following week. In other exchanges, Hamdan and his friends shared clips about Miller censuring Tlaib and promising to turn Gaza into a parking lot, marveling that “he’s ‘our’ congressman.”

“Congressmen are blatantly saying turn it into a parking lot! There’s no shame and hiding anymore. End of times are around the corners my brothers,” Hamdan wrote of Miller, later adding, “I’d beat the fudge out this POS” and also “I’ve never wanted to vote so bad.” A few days later, Hamdan suggested they bankroll a billboard in a neighboring town with an anti-Miller message and get Jewish Voice for Peace to sponsor it, a detail Miller’s attorneys claim as evidence of “his antisemitic views,” adding in a footnote that JVP is “a radical anti-Zionist group” that uses its Jewish identity to “provide cover for actual Jew-hatred disguised as political critique.” The same day, Hamdan opined that “someone needs to hack” the website Canary Mission, which doxes private citizens who criticize Israel on social media, and works with the State and Justice Departments to punish them via deportation, malicious prosecution, imprisonment, or all of the above.

In a motion to strike Miller’s counterclaim, **Pattakos** called it “the legal equivalent of a monkey throwing its feces at the walls of its cage”—a tactic the world would witness just a few months later, when Miller’s attorney shared the link to a Dropbox containing hundreds of files, including secret recordings of his conversations with his ex-wife in which he claims he has never recorded their conversations, and a photo of their naked toddler **Moreno’s legal team immediately dubbed** “CSAM.”

Pattakos argued the ability for Miller to access Hamdan’s phone through a public records request was completely unprecedented. “There is not a single case in the history of this State or Nation wherein data from a cell phone extraction, that was not used as evidence in a criminal trial, was ever considered a ‘public record,’ or produced as a ‘public record’ to third parties,” the motion stated. (The Cuyahoga County prosecutor’s office, which released the cellphone contents, did not respond to a request for comment.)

Nevertheless, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* printed without comment Miller’s depiction of Hamdan as “a man who spent nearly two years monitoring the Jewish Republican congressman, repeatedly expressing a desire to confront him physically, and finally acting on that obsession” in a front-page story noting as some sort of smoking gun that Hamdan, per the countercomplaint, had also considered calling out of work the day after Trump’s 2024 election because he was “having a real emotional crisis”—as if that did not accurately reflect the psychological state of roughly 49 percent of adult Americans.

It is probably worth noting that at least one of Miller's own family members **took to the Forward in 2022** to voice his dismay over his cousin's political career, quoting from a **similar column** ten years earlier written by yet another cousin voicing fear that the political rise of yet another extended Miller family member, Josh Mandel, would lead the nation and/or the Jewish community "deeper into the darkness." But following his election, the political establishment rolled out the welcome mat for Miller, dutifully reporting as fact his ceaseless claims of victimhood at the hands of everyone from random voicemail-leavers to Rashida Tlaib to the "Senate Twink" to a random doctor heartbroken by the needless deaths of dozens of family members.

Over the past year, Miller's campaign has collected max-out checks from a slew of deep-pocketed, traditionally Democratic donors, from beverage mogul **Charles Merinoff** to Solana co-founder **Anatoly Yakovenko** to security tycoon **Ira Riklis** to elite Obama bundler **Tony Mayer**. Perhaps the soft spot such individuals have for Trump's Music Man can help explain why so many journalists remained so preoccupied probing whether Troy Jackson threw a water bottle during a legislative meeting or Hasan Piker's dog's collar is sufficiently humane. Because there is no shaming the shameless, so the system rewards them instead, as Miller himself noted in his **memorable recent interview** with Jake Tapper:

"In 2016 when President Donald J. Trump faced the most extreme allegations that hit him day after day after day, guess what? He stayed in. And he was resilient. [And] this is why no one's attacking me on my policy, Jake, because they *can't*."