

ON COREY LEWANDOWSKI'S BIG LEGAL BILLS AND MUELLER'S DEADLINE FROM ROSENSTEIN

Quarterly political spending reports are out and they provide some hints about which current or former Trump aides have been spending a lot of time with Mueller's investigators. The NYT reported the other day that the Trump campaign has paid \$173,000 in the past quarter to the law firm representing Corey Lewandowski.

The campaign also paid \$173,000 to Mintz Levin, a law firm that has helped Mr. Trump's first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, handle inquiries related to the Russia investigations.

The suggestion that Lewandowski has spent quality time with Mueller's team of late is particularly interesting, for several reasons. First, Lewandowski had a number of key interactions with George Papadopoulos regarding the outreach from Russia, including drafting Trump's first foreign policy speech, which Papadopoulos reportedly told Ivan Timofeev was a sign that the campaign was interested in pursuing a Trump-Putin meeting.

April 27: Papadopoulos to Corey Lewandowski

"to discuss Russia's interest in hosting Mr. Trump. Have been receiving a lot of calls over the last month about Putin wanting to host him and the team when the time is right."

April 27: Papadopoulos authored

speech that he tells Timofeev is “the signal to meet”

[snip]

May 4, Papadopoulos to Lewandowski
(forwarding Timofeev email):

“What do you think? Is this something we want to move forward with?”

May 14, Papadopoulos to Lewandowski:

“Russian government[] ha[s] also relayed to me that they are interested in hostingMr. Trump.”

[snip]

June 19: Papadopoulos to Lewandowski

“New message from Russia”: “The Russian ministry of foreign affairs messaged and said that if Mr. Trump is unable to make it to Russia, if a campaign rep (me or someone else) can make it for meetings? I am willing to make the trip off the record if it’s in the interest of Mr. Trump and the campaign to meet specific people.”

Lewandowski was also the person that the House Intelligence Committee treated most curiously. HPSCI originally interviewed him in January, during the phase when HPSCI seemed to be interviewing key witnesses to be able to pass on to Trump how they would testify. At that point, Mueller had not yet contacted Lewandowski.

Even though Lewandowski never worked in the Administration, in that first appearance with HPSCI, he invoked privilege over parts of his

testimony. On March 8, HPSCI brought him back, the very last witness in their so-called investigation. After his three hour appearance, Adam Schiff discussed subpoenaing Lewandowski to compel him to answer questions he had still refused to answer (Schiff had also demanded HPSCI compel full testimony from Hope Hicks). In the same discussion of compelling Lewandowski to answer questions, Schiff suggested the committee should subpoena Stephen Miller.

After Lewandowski's testimony had wrapped, Schiff raised a new name he wanted to speak to: White House aide Stephen Miller.

Which is curious because WSJ reports that the legal defense fund supporting specific former campaign staffers paid Akin Gump \$115,000.

The fund directed most of its third-quarter spending to legal consulting, paying nearly \$115,000 to the law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and another \$8,500 to Schertler & Onorato LLP. The latter firm has represented Keith Schiller, Mr. Trump's longtime bodyguard who was interviewed by the House Intelligence Committee as part of its Russia investigation.

It's not publicly known which former campaign staffer Akin Gump represents, but two of the few key Trump people whose lawyers have not been publicly identified are Brad Parscale (though the campaign would probably pay for his legal defense at this point) and Miller.

Miller is the person whom Papadopoulos has said he *would* have told about the Russian offer of emails had he actually connected by phone the day he learned of it.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg reports (possibly based on Congressional sources) that Mueller is preparing to offer "reports" on his investigation.

Mueller is close to rendering judgment on two of the most explosive aspects of his inquiry: whether there were clear incidents of collusion between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, and whether the president took any actions that constitute obstruction of justice, according to one of the officials, who asked not to be identified speaking about the investigation.

[snip]

Rosenstein has made it clear that he wants Mueller to wrap up the investigation as expeditiously as possible, another U.S. official said.

This is actually not at all surprising. Trump is going to start firing people after the election, so Mueller's ability to work unimpeded may be dramatically curtailed shortly after that. If he's going to bring a big indictment, he has to do so in that time frame. Plus, after securing Paul Manafort and Michael Cohen's cooperation, he has cooperating witnesses on all the elements of a conspiracy Mueller had identified by last March, not to mention slam dunk obstruction charges tied to floated pardons. Everyone is scheduled to start being sentenced after the election, too. With the hints he has gotten extensive Lewandowski testimony (and reports that he had obtained far more documentation pertaining to Don Jr's actions), it would suggest that Mueller has at least tracked the game of telephone between Russians offering emails to the candidate anxious to accept that offer.

So this tells us what we might expect: the denouement of the Mueller investigation will happen, unless Trump works to undercut it, just after the election.

Update: In their plan for further investigation released in March, HPSCI Dems described that in his second committee appearance Lewandowski

refused, "to answer questions regarding his communication with President Trump regarding former FBI Director Comey, Special Counsel Mueller, and Attorney General Sessions, as well as his communications with certain administration officials pertaining to the June 9, 2016 meeting at Trump Tower." So it sounds like he's also got evidence pertaining to the June 9 meeting.

As I disclosed in July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.