

THERE'S A DECENT CHANCE JON KARL'S SOURCE IS BEING OR WAS INVESTIGATED FOR OBSTRUCTION

Jonathan Karl, ABC White House correspondent, reported yesterday with a certainty I'm hearing from none of the DOJ beat reporters that Mueller's report will amount to nothing.

Sources familiar with the investigation believe there are no more indictments coming from the special counsel. If Mueller follows the guidance of the man who appointed him and supervised his investigation, he cannot publicly disparage those who have not been charged with a crime.

From that, he spun out a letter Rod Rosenstein wrote at a time when Republicans were trying to expose some bureau and CIA informants, and ignored the intent of the Mueller Report, to suggest that Mueller can't say anything bad (in a confidential report to Bill Barr, not to Congress) about Trump.

[W]e don't need to speculate on the scope – the man who appointed Mueller has already given us a potential road map on what to expect from the special counsel.

The bottom line: Do not expect a harsh condemnation of President Donald Trump or any of his associates if they have not been charged with crimes.

I said yesterday I have no idea what The Mueller Report will bring – or even if The Mueller Report is actually where we'll learn about Mueller's findings. I said that, while there's

abundant evidence of a conspiracy between Trump and the Russians, it may never get charged, including for reasons that have to do with DOJ's treatment of sitting presidents. That remains true.

But what is also likely true is that at least one of Jonathan Karl's sources saying that they "believe there are no more indictments coming from" Mueller is either currently or already has been investigated for obstruction.

That's because the chief source of claims like this – particularly in reporting from White House correspondents – is one or another of Trump's lawyers, especially Right Wing operative Jay Sekulow and TV lawyer Rudy Giuliani. And we now know that both would have at least been scrutinized for obstruction.

In Sekulow's case, Michael Cohen says the lawyer edited his perjurious statement to Congress. And even in the Sekulow denial – as reported by ABC News – he denies just that he changed the timeline of Cohen's statement, not that he edited it.

During a closed-door hearing with the House Intelligence Committee on Wednesday, Michael Cohen, the former personal attorney and fixer to President Donald Trump, shared documents and emails with committee members showing what he said were edits to the false statement he provided to Congress in 2017, in an effort to bolster his public testimony last week, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

Testifying publicly before the House Oversight Committee last week, Cohen said Trump's current personal lawyer Jay Sekulow changed the former Trump loyalist's statement to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees regarding the duration of discussions about the Trump Tower Moscow project before he submitted it to Capitol Hill.

Last week Sekulow denied the claims in a statement to ABC News.

"Today's testimony by Michael Cohen that attorneys for the President edited or changed his statement to Congress to alter the duration of the Trump Tower Moscow negotiations is completely false."

Mueller cited Cohen's description of his communications with the White House in this period – and specifically the circumstances of preparing the statement – among the ways he helped the investigation.

Third, Cohen provided relevant and useful information concerning his contacts with persons connected to the White House during the 2017–2018 time period.

Fourth, Cohen described the circumstances of preparing and circulating his response to the congressional inquiries, while continuing to accept responsibility for the false statements contained within it.

With regards to Rudy, ABC News was among the outlets that recently provided details of what appears to be a pardon dangle to Cohen after he was raided.

In the weeks following the federal raids on former Michael Cohen's law office and residences last April, President Donald Trump's former lawyer and confidant was contacted by two New York attorneys who claimed to be in close contact with Rudy Giuliani, the current personal attorney to Trump, according to sources with direct knowledge of the discussions.

The outreach came just as Cohen, who spent more than a decade advocating for

Trump, was wrangling with the most consequential decision of his life; whether to remain in a joint defense agreement with the president and others, or to flip on the man to whom he had pledged immutable loyalty. The sources described the lawyers' contact with Cohen as an effort to keep him in the tent.

Yet for all the attention paid to what Cohen was willing to say about the president, his reluctance to answer a question about the last communications he had with Trump or someone acting on his behalf made news on its own. Cohen clammed up and claimed that federal prosecutors were actively probing that very issue.

"Unfortunately, this topic is something that's being investigated right now by the Southern District of New York, and I've been asked by them not to discuss and not to talk about these issues," Cohen said.

The sources familiar with the contacts said the two lawyers first reached out to Cohen late in April of last year and that the discussions continued for about two months. The attorneys, who have no known formal ties to the White House, urged Cohen not to leave the joint defense agreement, the sources told ABC News, and also offered a Plan B. In the event Cohen opted to exit the agreement, they could join his legal team and act as a conduit between Cohen and the president's lawyers.

At one point in the discussions, one of the attorneys sent Cohen a phone screenshot to prove they were in touch with Giuliani, the sources said.

According to ABC's sources, this matter is

currently under investigation by SDNY.

I mean, it's certainly possible that someone else is sourcing Karl's seeming unique certainty about what will come of the Mueller report. It's certainly possible that ABC's White House correspondent has better sources at DOJ than all the DOJ reporters who say they don't know. It's certainly possible his sources don't include someone that DOJ had at least reason to believe had participated in obstruction.

But if Karl's sources are people that his own outlet has reported to be under investigation for obstruction, he ought to at least temper his certainty that they can be believed.

Update: Rudy has gone on the record with exactly the line that Karl regurgitated yesterday.

As I disclosed last 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.