

COMEY AND FRIENDS EXPECTED JEFF SESSIONS TO RECUSE BY FEBRUARY 14

Here's another detail from Jim Comey's testimony that deserves more attention. On February 14, the day that President Trump asked Comey to drop the investigation into Mike Flynn, Comey and his aides expected Jeff Sessions to recuse himself from the investigation.

We also concluded that, given that it was a one-on-one conversation, there was nothing available to corroborate my account. We concluded it made little sense to report it to Attorney General Sessions, who we expected would likely recuse himself from involvement in Russia-related investigations. (He did so two weeks later.) [my emphasis]

Obviously, Sessions should have recused in any case, since he was involved in the campaign. But Comey specifically framed this as "Russia-related investigations," not Trump investigations generally. Comey doesn't say why the top people at FBI believed he would recuse, but by this point, the FBI would have pulled all intercepts involving Sergey Kislyak, so would have discovered ones reflecting conversations with Sessions.

In any case, to have that belief, the FBI presumably had already talked to Sessions about his conflicts with the Russian investigation.

That's consistent with something Sessions said in his recusal statement. He describes the recusal process as a several week series of meetings.

During the course of the last several weeks, I have met with the relevant

senior career Department officials to discuss whether I should recuse myself from any matters arising from the campaigns for President of the United States.

Having concluded those meetings today, I have decided to recuse myself from any existing or future investigations of any matters related in any way to the campaigns for President of the United States.

Yet it took two more weeks (actually, 16 days) for Sessions to recuse, which suggests he didn't do it just for the election-related reasons, and didn't do it when FBI first talked to him about it. He only did it once the leaks about his ties to Kislyak came out.

Given Trump's reported continued rage at Sessions for recusing – so much so he's considering firing him (do it!!!) – I find that very significant. It makes it more likely that Sessions and Trump spoke about a potential recusal in the interim weeks, and more likely that Trump thought he had a plan in place to kill any investigation that Sessions recusal killed.