HOW THE WHITE HOUSE'S TOLERANCE FOR WIFE-BEATERS EXPOSED THAT IT WAS HARBORING COUNTERINTELLIGENCE THREATS

There are a lot of important lessons about the White House's protection and promotion of Rob Porter even after the FBI informed the White House about his serial wife beating: about White House's tolerance for conflicts, about John Kelly's overblown competence. If you haven't read Dahlia Lithwick's piece on what it says about society's response to domestic abuse more generally, absolutely do.

There are also multiple theories about how this all came to light, whether the recent girlfriend who learned of the abuse after talking to the ex-wives about Porter's philandering made it happen, or whether the FBI did so in the wake of White House involvement in the Devin Nunes saga.

Whatever the answers to those issues, it's now clear what just or is about to happen.

Last night, the WaPo answered a question that should have been answered at yesterday's presser. There are dozens of people working in the White House who, like Porter, have not yet received clearance. Starting with the son-in-law that has been remapping the world while under active counterintelligence investigation for shaping policy in a way that may stave off familial bankruptcy.

> Dozens of White House employees are awaiting permanent security clearances and have been working for months with temporary approvals to handle sensitive

> information while the FBI continues to probe their backgrounds, according to U.S. officials.
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> People familiar with the security-clearance process said one of those White House officials with an interim approval is Jared Kushner — the president's son-in-law and one of his most influential advisers.

Then Politico provided the other, even more critical piece of this puzzle: FBI already told the White House that Porter *and others* would not get security clearance. And there are witnesses that Kelly knew about these multiple White House aides and thought they should be fired.

> White House chief of staff John Kelly was told several weeks ago that the FBI would deny full security clearances to multiple White House aides who had been working in the West Wing on interim security clearances.
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> Those aides, according to a senior administration official, included former White House staff secretary Rob Porter, who left the White House on Thursday after reports that he physically and verbally abused his two ex-wives.
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> The White House chief-of-staff told confidants in recent weeks that he had decided to fire anyone who had been denied a clearance — but had yet to act on that plan before the Porter allegations were first reported this week.

I figure around about noon we'll learn Jared was one of the others.

Remember: according to Supreme Court precedent, the President has final authority on matters of clearance. So if Trump wants to override the FBI's determination, he can. Which he might get

away with so long as it remained secret, so long as the press didn’t know that a bunch of people were working with the country’s most sensitive information even though the FBI had told the White House it was a very bad idea to let them. And know which ones they were.

But whether through the coincidental timing of a bunch of women refusing to let a serial abuser go on with his life or through orchestration by the Bureau or both, any effort to keep secret that the White House was delaying the obvious counterintelligence choice or even perhaps planning to defy the FBI about it is in the process of being exposed.

Trump is reportedly consulting now with two of the most likely counterintelligence problems, Jared and (on her own right, because of her own dodgy business deals) Ivanka, on a staff shake-up to try to make this problem go away.