

# TWO OTHER TRUMP TWEET INNOVATIONS: “FRAUDULENT ACTIVITIES” AND “CONFLICTS OF INTEREST”

Much was made over the weekend of Trump, for the first time (though he once RTed this Tweet mentioning the special counsel), invoking Robert Mueller’s name in his Twitter rants. (As a reminder, this searchable archive of his Tweets is genius.)



**realDonaldTrump**  Donald ... 17/03/18 20:12

The Mueller probe should never have been started in that there was no collusion and there was no crime. It was based on fraudulent activities and a Fake Dossier paid for by Crooked Hillary and the DNC, and improperly used in FISA COURT for surveillance of my campaign. WITCH HUNT!

But I want to look at another innovation in the Tweet. This is also the first time Trump has claimed the investigation itself is based on “fraudulent activities.” During the campaign, he once used the term “fraudulent activity” to accuse Hillary of “fraudulent activity.” And he’s a fan of the word “fraudulent,” having used it 17 times – to describe the Steele dossier, Ted Cruz’s IA victory, Obama’s claims about ObamaCare, and Liberian Ebola patient Thomas Duncan. He most often uses it to describe critical reporting or other claims (such as in advertisements) made about himself.



**Donald J. Trump** ✓  
@realDonaldTrump

Following

With all of its phony unnamed sources & highly slanted & even fraudulent reporting, **#Fake** News is DISTORTING DEMOCRACY in our country!

12:15 PM - 16 Jul 2017

Then, this morning, Trump for the first time accused the Mueller investigation (this time without using Bobby Three Sticks' name) of having "conflicts of interest," a term Trump has actually only used in two other Tweets (one, two), both describing Hillary.



**realDonaldTrump** ✓ Donald J. Trump 09:07  
A total WITCH HUNT with massive conflicts of interest!

While it's always fraught to try to understand Trump's feverish little brain, it is fairly clear his Tweets serve as a mirror of things he's seeing, most often, but by no means exclusively, Fox and Friends.

So I want to consider what these two innovations in his attacks on the Mueller investigation might suggest.

It may be nothing: just a reflection of his defensiveness.

It might mean his rat-fucking buddies are planning some new conspiracy theory they plan to use to try to undermine the Mueller inquiry; Roger Stone has been working the press this weekend. Or maybe it's an old one: last summer Trump's considered challenging Mueller's appointment because his past history with Jim Comey amounted to a conflict.

But there's another possibility.

In NYT's first coverage of Trump and John Dowd's increasing aggressiveness against Mueller, they tied it to two related events: the ongoing negotiations over a Mueller interview of Trump (which Axios claims still focuses on the Comey

and Flynn firings).

Mueller is said to have sent questions to Mr. Trump's legal team as part of negotiations over an interview with the president. Mr. Mueller is seeking the interview, according to two people close to the White House, in order to ask follow-up questions, but put forward the list as a start.

They also tie it to (their own report) that Mueller subpoenaed the Trump Organization, which they in turn tie to increased unease among Trump's legal team.

To keep the president at bay, the lawyers – led by the White House lawyer Ty Cobb – told him that Mr. Mueller's investigation would be over by last December and that they would ask Mr. Mueller to put out a statement saying the president was not a target of the investigation.

But instead, Mr. Trump was livid anew this week over the Times report that Mr. Mueller had subpoenaed his corporate records, including those related to Russia, according to one person close to the White House.

The president's lawyers appear to be feeling increasingly uneasy about where they stand. This month, Mr. Trump met with a veteran Washington lawyer, Emmet T. Flood, to discuss coming on board to take over the president's dealings with Mr. Mueller's office and possibly replacing Donald F. McGahn II as White House counsel. The president's personal lawyers, Mr. Dowd and Jay Sekulow, did not know about the meeting, prompting concerns that they could be pushed aside, and potentially making them less resistant to Mr. Trump's whims about

handling the inquiry.

While the other possibilities are admittedly more likely (that is, that these two innovations reflect nothing more than Trump's natural projection), imagine what would happen if Mueller asked Trump to account for his own conflicts and fraudulent activities, both key to his business model.

Yes, accusing Robert Mueller (or his predecessors) of committing fraudulent activities and having conflicts of interest is an attack squarely within the norm for Trump, those terms are also the perfect mirror for the President's own business.