

THE EVASION IN TRUMP'S RESPONSE ON THE JUNE 9 MEETING STATEMENT: DID PUTIN DICTATE THE STATEMENT?

As early as January 8, Robert Mueller's team was asking Donald Trump what his role in this statement on the June 9 Trump Tower meeting with Russians offering dirt on Hillary was; Don Jr's lawyer released the statement on July 8, 2017.

It was a short introductory meeting. I asked Jared and Paul to stop by. We primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children that was active and popular with American families years ago and was since ended by the Russian government, but it was not a campaign issue at that time and there was no follow up. I was asked to attend the meeting by an acquaintance, but was not told the name of the person I would be meeting with beforehand.

The answer Trump's lawyers gave in January *seems* to admit Trump dictated the statement.

You have received all of the notes, communications and testimony indicating that the President dictated a short but accurate response to the New York Times article on behalf of his son, Donald Trump, Jr. His son then followed up by making a full public disclosure regarding the meeting, including his public testimony that there was nothing to the meeting and certainly no evidence of collusion.⁵⁶

This subject is a private matter with

the New York Times. The President is not required to answer to the Office of the Special Counsel, or anyone else, for his private affairs with his children. In any event, the President's son, son-in-law, and White House advisors and staff have made a full disclosure on these events to both your office and the congressional committees.⁵⁷

Note: the statement is assuredly *not* accurate. The SJC materials show the Russian participants in the meeting spent weeks in November 2016 trying to follow-up, but the follow-up got deferred (maybe, or maybe not) because of new difficulties in scheduling.

In any case, saying that the notes, communications, and testimony "indicate" that Trump dictated the statement stops short of saying that he did so.

As a reminder, here's the timeline of events leading up to that statement getting released.

Early July 7: NYT approaches WH officials and lawyers; WH schedules a conference call w/NYT for next morning.

July 7: Trump chats up Putin at dinner. (Note, whenever Melania decides it's time to get revenge on Trump for treating her like shit, she can go tell Mueller what she overheard of this conversation.)

July 8, morning: Conference call doesn't happen. NYT submits 14 questions about the meeting to the WH and lawyers of Trump campaign aides who attended the meeting (do these aides include all of Don Jr, Kushner, and Manafort?); Trump and his aides develop a response on Air Force One, with Hicks coordinating with Don Jr and his lawyer Alan Garten, who were both in NY, via text message.

July 8, afternoon: Jamie Gorelick

provides a statement describing his revisions to his security clearance forms.

He has since submitted this information, including that during the campaign and transition, he had over 100 calls or meetings with representatives of more than 20 countries, most of which were during transition. Mr. Kushner has submitted additional updates and included, out of an abundance of caution, this meeting with a Russian person, which he briefly attended at the request of his brother-in-law Donald Trump Jr. As Mr. Kushner has consistently stated, he is eager to cooperate and share what he knows.

July 8, evening: Garten issues a statement in Don Jr's name stating,

It was a short introductory meeting. I asked Jared and Paul to stop by. We primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children that was active and popular with American families years ago and was since ended by the Russian government, but it was not a campaign issue at that time and there was no follow up. I was asked to attend the meeting by an acquaintance, but was not told the name of the person I would be meeting with beforehand.

Right in the middle of this heated effort to respond to the NYT, Trump bizarrely spent an

hour chatting Vladimir Putin up over dinner at the G-20 (yeah, I wrote that comment about Melania in February!). The question here is not just “why did you release such a partial statement that the documentary record proves is inaccurate?” Nor is it, “why did you emphasize adoptions – Russian code for sanctions – rather than the sanctions that were at the core of the meeting?”

It’s also the unstated question: “Did you dictate that statement? Or did Vladimir Putin?”

Here’s the nutty bit. We don’t actually have to speculate about whether that spin – adoptions rather than sanctions – came up in the chat between Putin and Trump. In an interview not long after news of the June 9 meeting broke, Trump actually told the NYT he and Putin were talking about adoptions.

TRUMP: She was sitting next to Putin and somebody else, and that’s the way it is. So the meal was going, and toward dessert I went down just to say hello to Melania, and while I was there I said hello to Putin. Really, pleasantries more than anything else. It was not a long conversation, but it was, you know, could be 15 minutes. Just talked about – things. Actually, it was very interesting, we talked about adoption.

HABERMAN: You did?

TRUMP: We talked about Russian adoption. Yeah. I always found that interesting. Because, you know, he ended that years ago. And I actually talked about Russian adoption with him, which is interesting because it was a part of the conversation that Don [Jr., Mr. Trump’s son] had in that meeting. As I’ve said – most other people, you know, when they call up and say, “By the way, we have information on your opponent,” I think most politicians – I was just with a lot of people, they said [inaudible], “Who

wouldn't have taken a meeting like that?" They just said—

HABERMAN: The senators downstairs?

TRUMP: A lot of them. They said, "Who wouldn't have taken a meeting like that?"

By his own admission, Trump went from the July 7 dinner chat about adoptions with Putin and "dictated" a statement that just happened to focus, misleadingly, on adoptions.

So, yeah, the big question in this entire list is the unstated one: did you dictate that statement? Or did Putin?