

PAUL MANAFORT IS ONE OF 37 PEOPLE IN AN OMERTÀ WITH THE PRESIDENT

Apparently, Bob Woodward committed some journalism along with canonizing racist John Kelly and wife-beater Rob Porter in his book: he got a number for how many people are included the Joint Defense Agreement that gives Rudy Giuliani such confidence the President is not at risk: 37.

And Politico committed still more journalism and answered the question we've all been asking: yes, Paul Manafort is among those 37.

Giuliani also confirmed that Trump's lawyers and Manafort's have been in regular contact and that they are part of a joint defense agreement that allows confidential information sharing.

"All during the investigation we have an open communication with them," he said. "Defense lawyers talk to each other all the time where as long as our clients authorize it therefore we have a better idea of what's going to happen. That's very common."

Giuliani confirmed he spoke with Manafort's lead defense lawyer Kevin Downing shortly before and after the verdicts were returned in the Virginia trial, but the former mayor wouldn't say what he discusses with the Manafort team. "It'd all be attorney-client privilege not just from our point of view but from theirs," he said.

That means when John Dowd complained that the raid of Manafort's condo (where his eight iPods were seized), that was based on privileged

conversations between lawyers. And when, in January, Trump confidently said he was sure Manafort would protect him, that was based on privileged conversations between lawyers. And when, just before the EDVA trial, Kevin Downing was ostentatiously saying there was no way Manafort was flipping, and when he was balking on a plea with Mueller immediately after the trial, he was also talking to Rudy Giuliani.

Mind you, Rudy G will learn right away if Manafort starts considering cooperating, rather than just pleading, because Manafort will have to (finally!) drop out of the JDA before those discussions start.

And while I suspect Mueller has slowly been peeling away people like Sam Patten, that the JDA is so big likely means some or most of the following people are part of the omertà (and Michael Cohen, Rick Gates, and Mike Flynn *were* part of it):

- Paul Manafort and Konstantin Kilimnik
- Jared Kushner
- The Trump Org defendants: Don Jr, Rhonna Graff
- Bill Burck's clients: Steve Bannon, Reince Priebus, Don McGahn (and up to three more)
- Victoria Toensing's clients: Mark Corallo, Erik Prince, Sam Clovis
- The hush payment recipients: Hope Hicks, Brad Parscale, Keith Schiller
- Roger Stone and his buddies: Stone, Michael Caputo, Sam Nunberg, Andrew Miller, plus some (probably)

That's 20. Some other likely (and enticing) JDA members are: Devin Nunes, Jeff Sessions, Tom Barrack, Keith Kellogg, John Mashburn, KT McFarland, JD Gordon, Walid Phares, Stephen Miller, Sean Spicer, Rob Porter, Corey Lewandowski, John Kelly. Heck, it's not even clear that George Papadopoulos is not part of the JDA.

But that still leaves space in the JDA for people who were already comparing notes with known members of the JDA, including Rinat Akhmetshin, Rob Goldstone, and Ike Kaveladze (along with Emin and Aras Agalarov, who are all represented by Scott Balber).

No wonder Rudy thinks he knows everything that Mueller has.

That's why the collective panic on the discovery that Stone's phone was likely among the ~10 or so that Mueller got warrants for in the wake of Rick Gates' cooperation agreement is so interesting, and also why Manafort, playing his part as point, tried so hard to find out who the other four AT&T users whose phones were obtained with his own.

These guys may be good at omertà. But every single one we've seen so far has shitty OpSec; they've been saying their co-conspiracy communications on their phones and on iCloud. Plus there are people like Omarosa wandering among them, dismissed as irrelevant even while they record everything they hear. And meanwhile, Mueller is chipping away at the edges, people they haven't considered (like Patten). And all the while he's been building his case against Stone and Don Jr.