

ABC CONDUCTS AN “EXCLUSIVE” “INTERVIEW” ABOUT SENTENCING GUIDELINES WITHOUT ASKING ABOUT SENTENCING GUIDELINES

Update: Overnight ABC posted the full interview. It does discuss sentencing guidelines without talking about the significance of Barr overriding them. As laid out here, Barr provides three inconsistent explanations for why he intervened.

In its story writing up its “exclusive” “interview” with Attorney General Bill Barr, ABC gets to the core of the issue: The Attorney General not only intervened to override the sentencing recommendation of career prosecutors, but he did so in defiance of the sentencing guidelines recommended by the Probation Office.

In a stunning reversal, the Justice Department overruled a recommendation by its own prosecution team that Stone spend seven to nine years in jail and told a judge that such a punishment – which was in line with sentencing guidelines – “would not be appropriate.”

Yet ABC didn’t ask Barr about the sentencing guidelines, at least not in the clip posted. Nor did Pierre Thomas ask any of the follow-up questions about that:

- How he could ever justify overriding line prosecutors on a sentencing

recommendation that deviated from guidelines.

- Whether he had ever done so in the past.
- How he could be—as he claimed to be—surprised that prosecutors resigned given that this action is unprecedented and not justified by sentencing guidelines.
- Whether he believed sentencing guidelines were too harsh and should be amended downward, even while he maligns District Attorneys around the country for advocated lesser sentences.

In short, in this “interview” ABC didn’t ask Barr the first question that needs to be answered. As a result, Thomas waltzed through this interview to its typical Bill Barr conclusion, where *others* are at fault for asking why guidelines designed to prevent precisely this kind of politicized tampering were overridden, where Bill Barr has a right to be “irritated” for being called out for engaging in such a naked political act.

Instead of asking that basic question, ABC allowed the Attorney General to claim that the problem was not Barr’s actions, which have rightly been described as unprecedented, but instead the President’s tweets.