

PAUL MANAFORT'S CLAIMS ABOUT WIKILEAKS IN HIS SEPTEMBER 13, 2018 INTERVIEW

Paul Manafort's September 13, 2018 interview is the only one where he is believed to tell the truth about a number of topics. It was the last one before Mueller gave him a plea deal that staved off an election season trial, leading to a period of cooperation during which Manafort substantively backed off much of what he admitted on September 13. Manafort's lawyer, Kevin Downing, then told Rudy Giuliani what Manafort got asked.

The publicly released version includes substantive redactions regarding Roger Stone, WikiLeaks, and Jared Kushner (as well as Konstantin Kilimnik and the kickback system via which Manafort got paid). But the Senate Intelligence Committee appears to have obtained an unredacted version. So I wanted to summarize what the SSCI Report shows about WikiLeaks and Kushner. Where I can identify it, I will italicize the information that *was not redacted* in the BuzzFeed release. Everything else was hidden as part of an ongoing investigation in January 2, 2020 but was no longer considered sensitive when SSCI released its report (this may reflect ongoing investigative work that Bill Barr killed).

fn 539: Manafort told the FBI that, after his resignation, but before the election, he and Trump had spoken "a few times. "

fn 540: While Manafort claimed to have not recalled the substance of these interactions, he did recall giving Trump advice on Trump's performance in the second debate and giving

Trump ideas for the third debate.

fn 542: Manafort also told the SCO that from the time he left the Campaign until the election, he met with Kushner "once or twice" and spoke to Kushner on the phone "five or six times."

fn 543: Manafort said that both sides reached out to one another.

fn 544: According to Manafort, Donald Trump and others in his family were aware that Manafort and Kushner were in contact, and Kushner "thought it would be good" for Manafort to call Trump.

fn 547: On November 5, 2016, Manafort sent a document entitled "Securing the Victory" to at least Trump, Kushner, and Reince Priebus.[snip] While Manafort recalled in his interview with the SCO that he sent the memorandum to Trump's executive assistant, the Trump Organization did not produce any such document as part of the Committee's request. Because of other known deficiencies in the Trump Organization's document responses, the Committee does not draw the conclusion that no document was sent. Not all senior individuals in the Trump Campaign engaged in substantive interactions with Manafort after his departure. For instance, while Steve Bannon was the recipient of short messages of encouragement from Manafort and responded in kind, Bannon made clear internally that he thought further interactions with Manafort would negatively impact the Campaign. In response to Priebus forwarding Manafort's November 5, 2016 memorandum to him, Bannon responded, "We need to avoid Manafort like he has a disease. Dems will say that the Russians are helping us win." Email, Bannon to Priebus, November 5, 2016 (SKB_SSCl0000964)

fn 549: Manafort told the SCO that that he had "no information" that Russia hacked voting machines.

fn 550 Manafort also sent the memorandum to Sean Hannity, although he said he did not expect Hannity to talk to Trump about it.

fn 1444: Manafort also recalled hearing from Stone sometime in June 2016 that “a source close to WikiLeaks confirmed that WikiLeaks had the emails from Clinton’s server.”

fn 1445: Like Gates, Manafort recalled Stone telling him that the emails would be released “soon,” but Stone “did not know when.”

fn 1446: Manafort, who was not convinced that the documents were coming out, directed Gates to check in with Stone “from time to time” to see if his WikiLeaks · information remained “real and viable.”

fn 1475: Because Manafort was initially dubious that Stone had accurate information about WikiLeaks, he instructed Stone “not to tell Trump until they could. confirm it.” *Manafort said that he wanted to keep Trump focused on speeches and meeting members of Congress, not distracted “by the titillation of a WikiLeaks release.”*

fn 1476: In addition, Manafort believed Stone would have told Trump anyway because he “wanted the credit for knowing in advance.”

fn 1494: Witness testimony indicates that Stone may have raised WikiLeaks again to Trump in late July, shortly before the DNC release occurred. Although Manafort did not know whether Stone and Trump spoke about WikiLeaks that week, he assumed they did.

fn 1507: *On the afternoon of July 22, Manafort and Trump discussed how they could use the DNC emails relating to Debbie Wasserman Schultz.*

fn 1508: Although Manafort was confused by Stone’s prediction, which was that WikiLeaks had emails from “Clinton’s server,” whereas the document released that day came from the DNC, he. still used the “fact of the hack and the substance of the emails” to attack Clinton and deflect attention from Trump’s comments towards Senator Ted Cruz and Cruz’s wife. [snip] For example, Manafort sought to “draw [a] comparison to [the] fact that the Dems attack Russia for

hacking them but want us to believe that the server in HC['s] home was safe from hacking” and that Clinton had “put national security at risk.” Email, Manafort to Spicer, Miller, Parscale, Reed, Gates, Fabrizio, and Kushner, July 24, 2016

fn 1513: Similarly, despite Manafort’s initial skepticism, after the email release on July 22, Manafort “thought that Stone had been right.”

fn 1518: *Senior Campaign officials believed that the [Russia are you listening] statement was unscripted.*

fn 1523: In response [to Manafort’s reminder that Stone claimed to have access to WikiLeaks, sourced to GJ in Mueller Report], Trump directed Manafort to stay in touch with Stone to see if there were more emails coming out.

fn 1524: Manafort then spoke with Stone during the week of the Democratic National Convention. Stone was in Cleveland for the Republican National Convention, which occurred directly prior to the Democratic National Convention.

fn 1525: At the time, Stone said he did not know what else would come out or when, but he agreed to follow up, although he did not say when he would do so.

fn 1617: At the end of September, Stone privately conveyed information about a future WikiLeaks release to Trump and Manafort. Manafort, who had left the Campaign in August, recalled speaking with Stone *around the first presidential debate between Trump and Clinton, which took place on September 26, 2016.*

fn 1618: Stone told Manafort that “John Podesta was going to be in the barrel” and that “there were going to be leaks of John Podesta’s emails.”

fn 1678: Manafort recalled Trump acknowledging to him that “Stone had information on the release in advance” of it becoming public.

fn 1679: Manafort spoke with Stone by phone and

told Stone that Stone had been right. Stone's cell phone records show a 17-minute call with Manafort on October 12, although they may have been in touch through other means following the Podesta release.