

DONALD TRUMP'S CONTEMPTUOUS LEAKING

A month ago, I noted that several stories about Trump's engagement of a firm to search for additional stolen documents were wildly inconsistent.

WaPo and CNN both have stories about searches by a professional firm on additional Trump properties, looking for stolen classified documents.

In addition to at least three paragraphs that are affirmatively misleading (one that does not push back on a bullshit quote about how cooperative Trump has been, one that described Trump's outright obstruction as a "breakdown ... in trust," and one that claims Trump is trying to avoid another high profile search when the further search was ordered by Chief Judge Beryl Howell) WaPo **describes** only searches of Bedminster and, later, Trump Tower.

Trump's legal team hired an outside firm to carry out the search of his golf club in Bedminster, N.J., and, more recently, Trump Tower in New York, according to the people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information.

In one paragraph, it describes that *Trump's lawyers* told DOJ they did not turn up more documents, but in a follow-up, WaPo describes an attestation that may or may not apply to just Bedminster.

I did the post because of the inconsistency, but also because, in the past, when we've seen aggressive pitches from Trump like this (his cover story about putting a lock on the storage facility where he had stashed his stolen documents is another example), it has generally been an attempt to get ahead of something really damning.

Two days later, WaPo seemed to report that Trump had managed to get through whatever damning bit he was trying to hide. It stated as fact that Chief Judge Beryl Howell would not hold Trump in contempt.

A federal judge on Friday declined to hold former president Donald Trump's office in contempt for not fully complying with a May subpoena to return all classified documents in his possession, according to people familiar with the proceedings.

U.S. District Judge Beryl A. Howell told Justice Department lawyers and Trump's legal team to come to an agreement themselves over what actions or assurances by Trump's office would satisfy the government, according to these people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe sealed court proceedings.

"The President and his counsel will continue to be transparent and cooperative," Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung said in a statement to The Washington Post.

But a report from Alan Feuer yesterday describes that Howell has not yet made a decision about whether to hold Trump in contempt or not.

At a court hearing held behind closed doors last month, Judge Howell put off ruling on the government's contempt request. The judge has still not issued a decision, according to the people

familiar with the matter.

As Feuer describes it, on Wednesday, Howell ordered Trump to share the names of the people who did the search with DOJ. Trump had tried to shield those names – purportedly out of concern about leaks, which has consistently been a bullshit line Trump’s lawyers have used. But it’s more likely his team was concerned that the PIs would have to appear before the grand jury themselves.

A federal judge has ordered lawyers for former President Donald J. Trump to give the government the names of the private investigators who searched Mr. Trump’s properties late last year for any remaining classified documents, part of what appeared to be a step by the Justice Department toward questioning the investigators about their efforts, two people familiar with the matter said.

The order, issued on Wednesday by Beryl A. Howell, the chief judge of the Federal District Court in Washington,

[snip]

The more recent spat began when prosecutors asked Mr. Trump’s lawyers for the names of the investigators who searched the storage facility and other Trump properties – among them, Mar-a-Lago; Mr. Trump’s golf club in Bedminster, N.J.; and Trump Tower in New York.

According to the people familiar with the matter, the lawyers offered to make the investigators available for questioning but wanted their identities shielded by a protective order, out of concern that the government might leak the information to the news media.

It's certainly possible Trump worries that allowing an independent interview of these people will disclose areas where they were not permitted to search (or other games like the others Trump already got caught playing).

Whatever it is, though, this suggests that Trump *continued* to bullshit the press after his first attempts to do so regarding the follow-on searches.

And the lies to the press aren't going to keep Trump from being held in contempt (and then jailed until he complies with a subpoena).