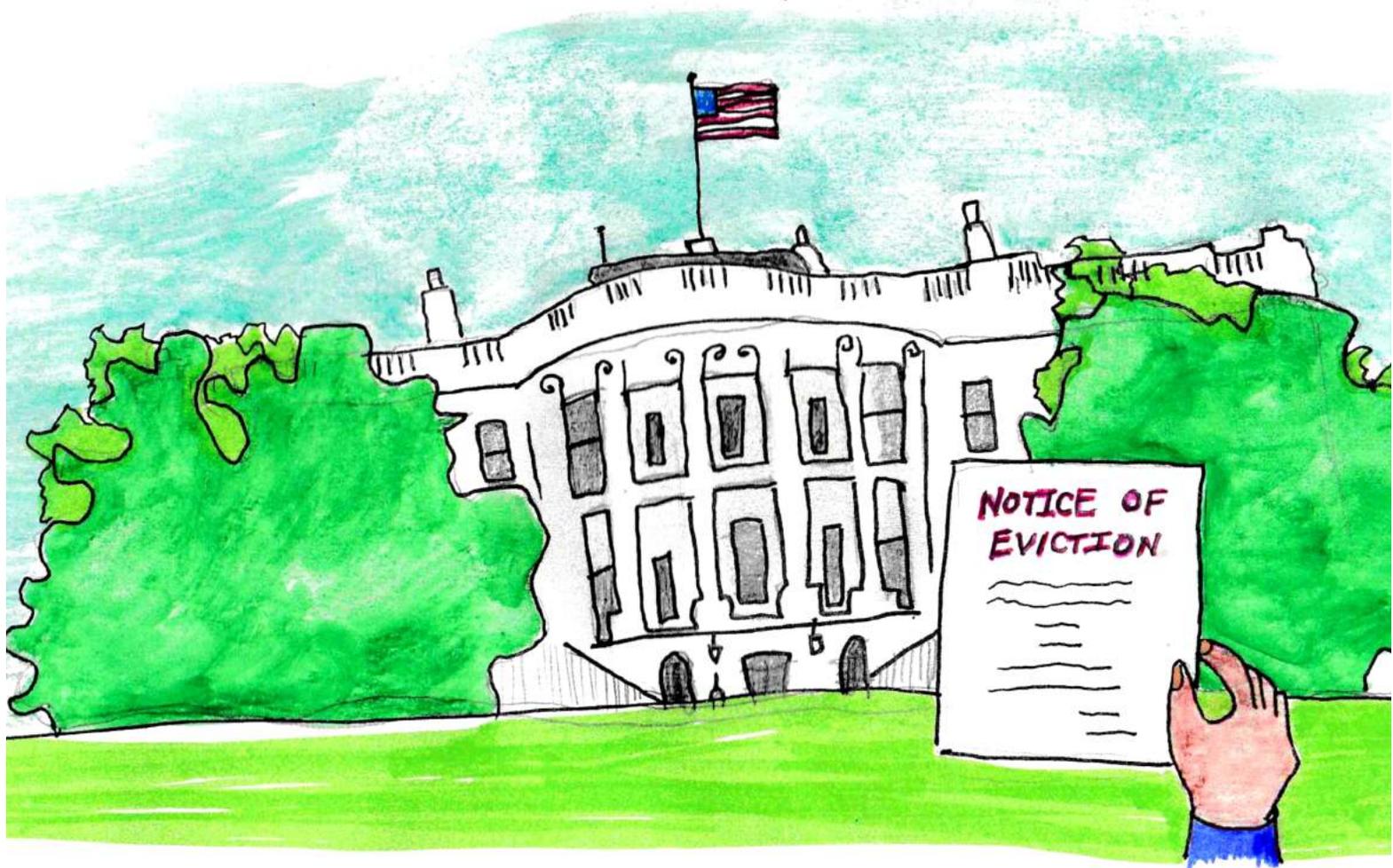


Mueller Report Primer

A PICTURE BOOK FOR GROWNUPS
WHO HAVEN'T READ THE MUELLER REPORT



Freeman Ng and Ghanem

MUELLER REPORT PRIMER

A PICTURE BOOK FOR GROWNUPS
WHO HAVEN'T READ THE MUELLER REPORT

Text by Freeman Ng

Illustrations by Ghanem

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www.MuellerPrimer.com

Freeman Ng is a former Google software engineer and the writer of the Trumpbert comic strip, a parody of Dilbert satirizing Donald Trump.

www.Trumpbert.com

And the co-author, with poet, political writer, and former Canadian diplomat and UC Berkeley professor Peter Dale Scott, of *Poetry And Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming To Jakarta*.

www.PoetryAndTerror.com



Freeman's A.I. assisted digital art can be found at:

www.DeepWall.art

Ghanem is the illustrator of the Trumpbert comic strip.

"To think and act positively in response to America's present political crisis, it is better to laugh than to weep. Freeman Ng's trenchant comic book summary of the Mueller Report helps us to do that."

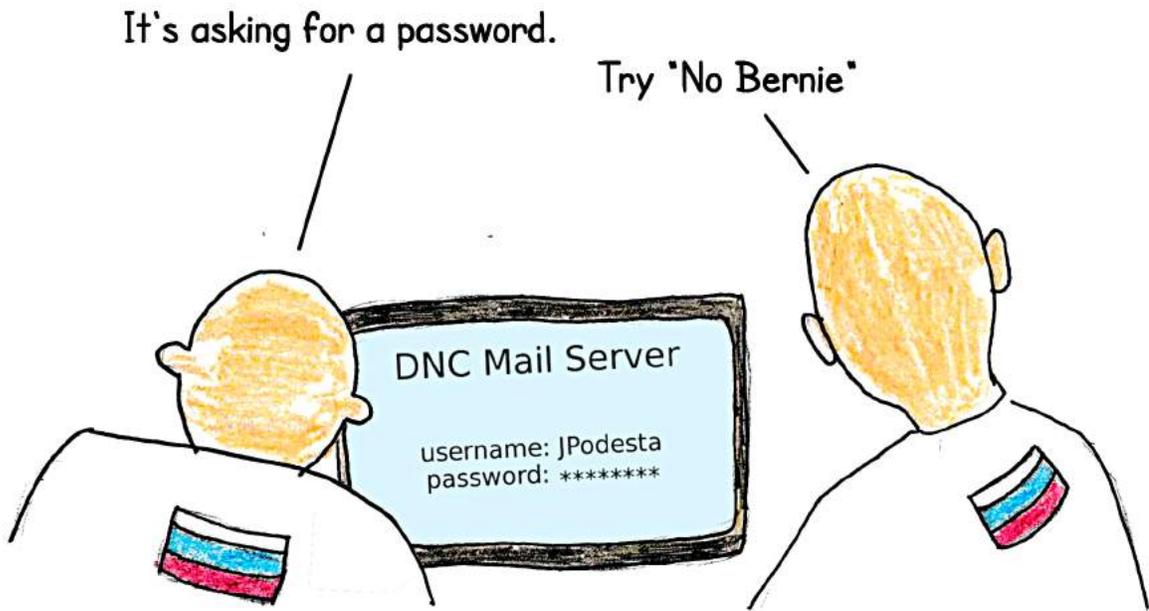
– Peter Dale Scott, author of *The American Deep State*



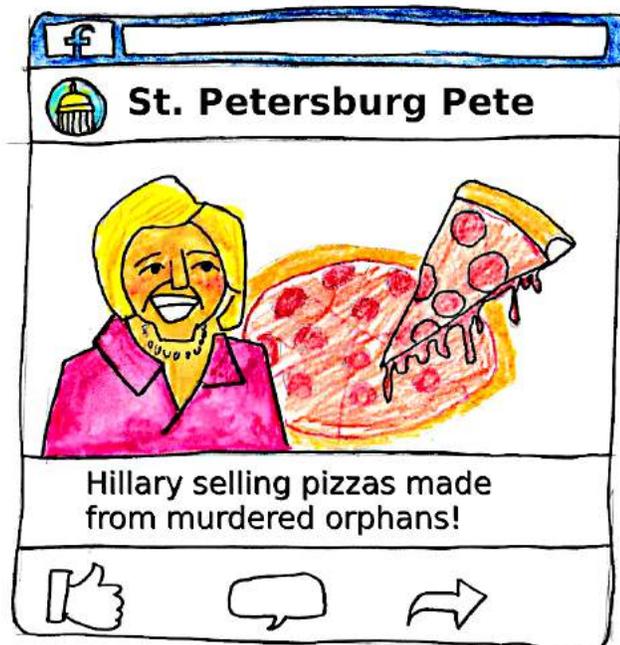
In the aftermath of the 2016 Presidential election, the FBI launched an investigation into Russian interference, including possible complicity by members of Donald Trump's campaign, as it appeared that at least one of them knew about hacked DNC (Democratic National Committee) emails before they were released.



After Trump fired Republican FBI Director James Comey for refusing to state publicly that Trump was not under investigation, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein (a Republican Trump appointee) selected former FBI Director Robert Mueller (also a Republican) to take over the investigation as special counsel.



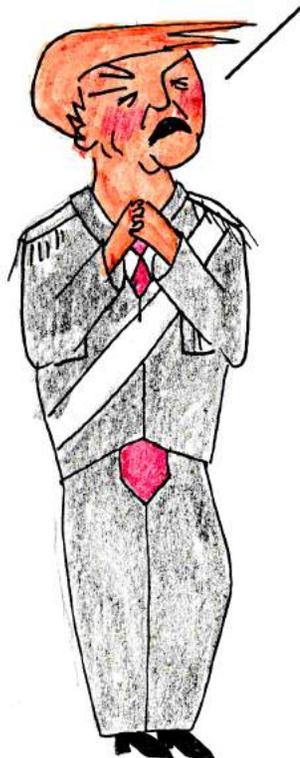
The Mueller Report, issued after two years of investigation, detailed significant Russian attempts to hack our democracy.





Foreign interference in our elections should be a serious non-partisan concern to every American, but Republican lawmakers (who benefitted from that interference) have opposed all attempts to strengthen our election infrastructure against future attacks.

Are you listening, Russia?
It's me, Donald.

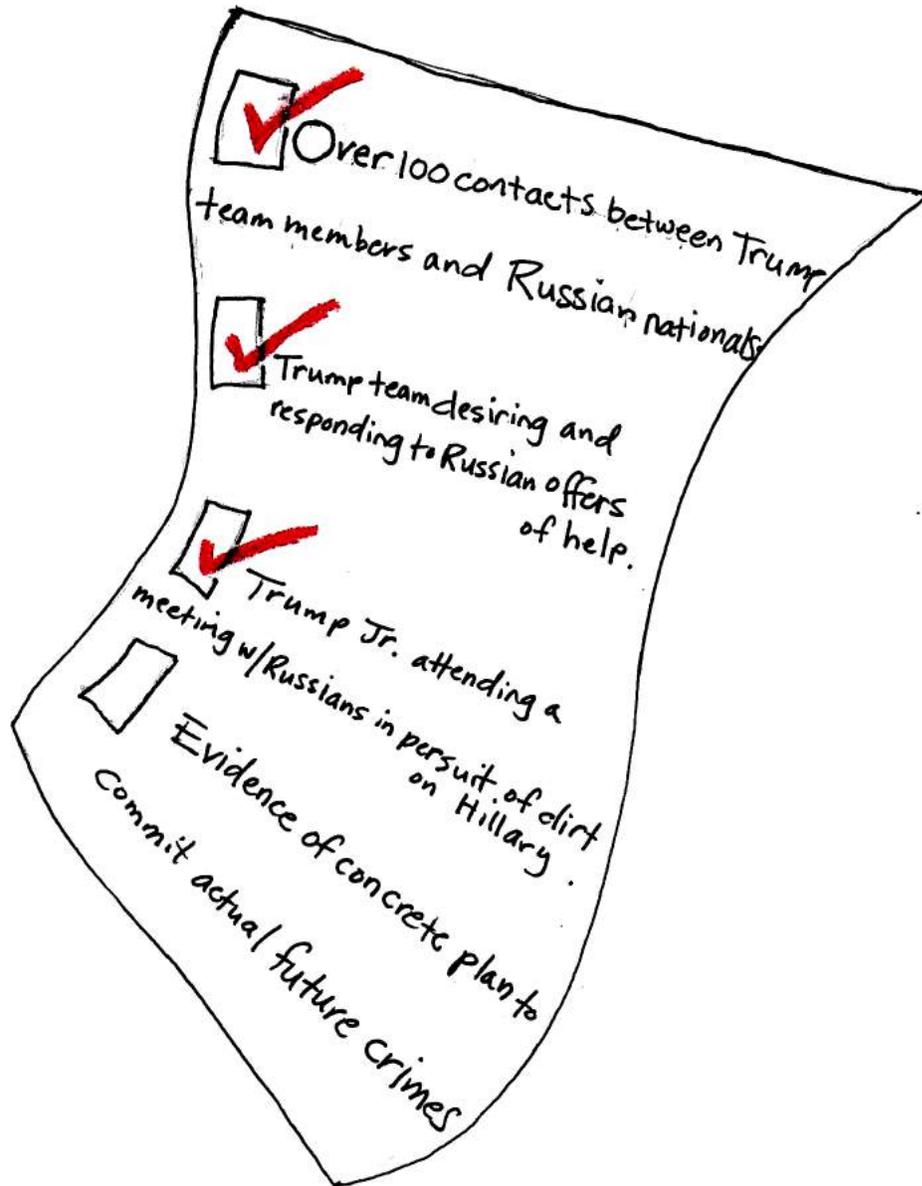


The investigation also discovered that Donald Trump did not just benefit from Russian assistance, but welcomed and even pursued it.

“[Criminal conspiracy] requires more than the two parties taking actions that were informed by or responsive to the other's actions or interests.”

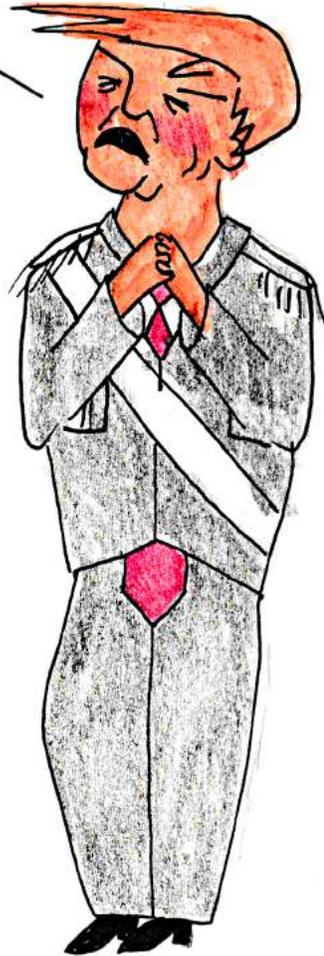
– Mueller Report (Introduction to Volume I)

Mueller measured Trump’s complicity in Russian interference against a very high standard.



While the report lists many cases of “two parties taking actions that were informed by or responsive to the other’s actions or interests,” Mueller was ultimately unable to establish criminal conspiracy, possibly because, as he noted in the report, many potential witnesses deleted or encrypted their electronic communications, or invoked their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination to avoid having to testify.

I can't go to prison!
I have bone spurs!



But the report didn't end there.

In the course of the investigation, Mueller discovered many cases of Trump attempting to kill or limit the investigation, alter records to support his innocence, or influence witnesses who might testify against him.

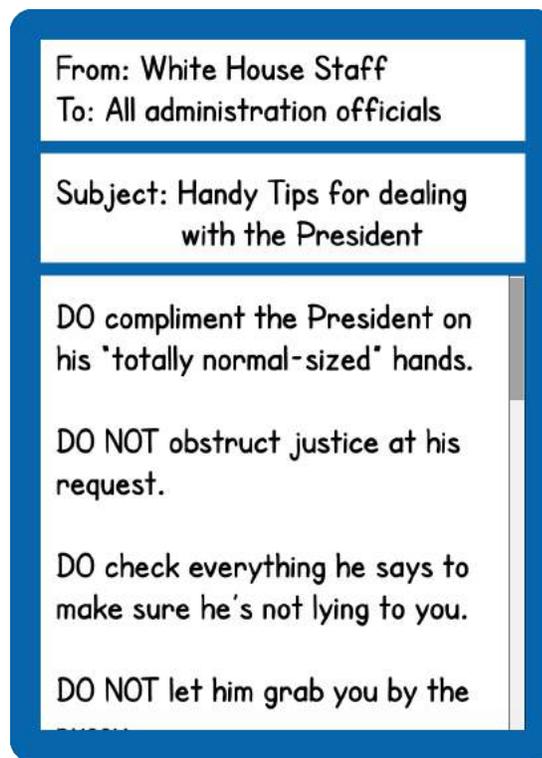


This opened up the possibility that Trump might be guilty of obstruction of justice, which is still a crime even if prosecutors are unable to charge someone with the crime he or she is allegedly covering up.

The report went on to detail ten areas in which the President tried to obstruct the Mueller investigation or the FBI investigation that preceded it.

1. Michael Flynn

OR: "FLYNN FLAM MAN"



- Tried to get FBI Director James Comey to stop the investigation into Flynn's contacts with Russian nationals. (Mueller Report, section II.B.7)
- Asked Deputy National Security Advisor K. T. McFarland to write a letter stating that he had nothing to do with Flynn's activities, which she refused to do because she didn't know if it was true. (II.B.9)

2. Reactions to the launch of the Russia investigation

OR: "REMEMBER THE ALIBI!"

“Oh my God. This is terrible. This is the end of my Presidency. I’m fucked.”

– Donald Trump upon learning about the appointment of the special counsel, as quoted by the Mueller Report (II.E.1)

- Pressured Attorney General Jeff Sessions to un-recuse himself from the investigation. (II.C.1)
- Pressured various high-level officials to make public statements declaring his innocence. (II.C.3)

3. James Comey

OR: "IRE AND LIES"

I'm the President. I have the legal right to fire you.



But NOT if you're doing it to cover your own ass!



James Comey
FBI Director

- Fired James Comey for refusing to proclaim that he was not under investigation. (II.D.2)
- Lied to the public about that reason for firing him. (II.D.2)

4. Efforts to kill the investigation

OR: "THE MISFIRES OF OBSTRUCTOR"

You know this sort of thing
didn't work out very well
for Nixon, don't you?



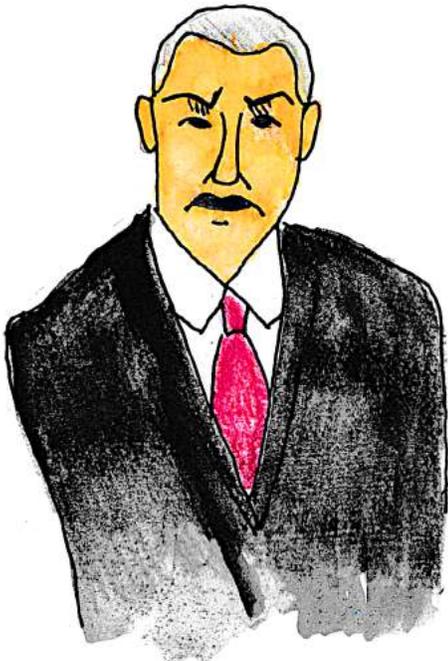
Don McGahn
White House Counsel

- Forced Attorney General Jeff Sessions to resign for launching the investigation (but did not accept the resignation). (II.E.1)
- Ordered White House Counsel Don McGahn to have Robert Mueller fired. (Which McGahn refused to do.) (II.E.3)

5. Efforts to limit the investigation

OR: "NO CRIME LIKES THE PRESENT"

That might make me a co-conspirator in obstruction of justice!



Corey Lewandowski
former Trump campaign chairman

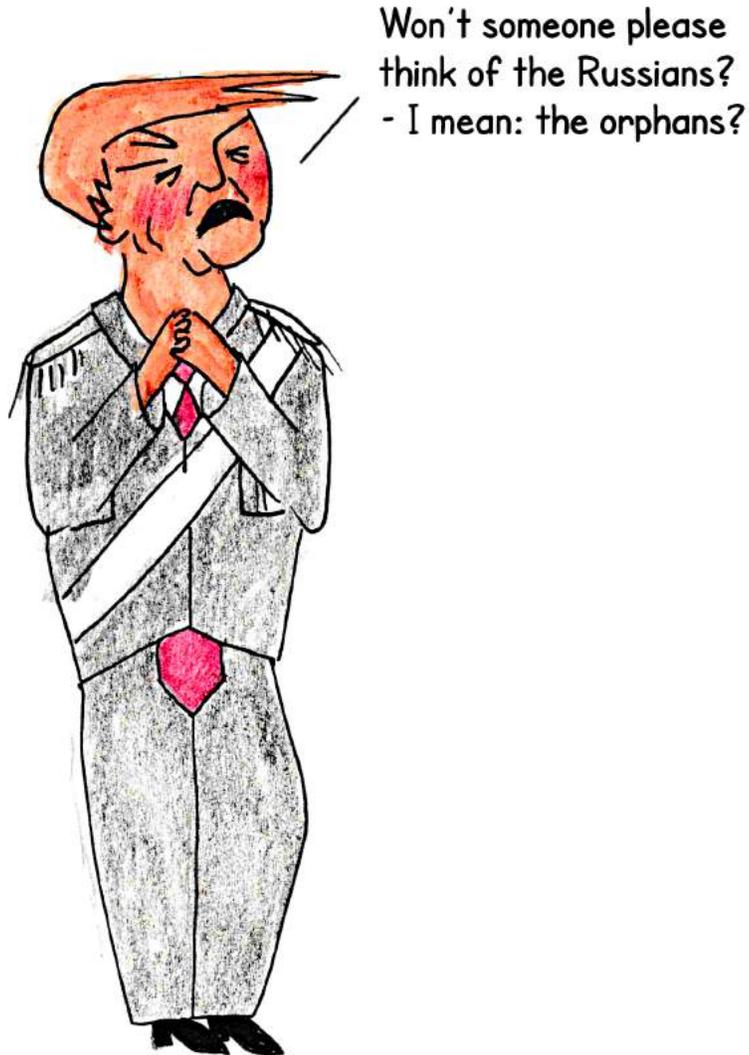
There's nothing to worry about. I can't be indicted for that.



- Ordered former campaign chairman Corey Lewandowski to deliver an order to Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the investigation must be limited to future election interference only. (II.F.1-2)

6. The Trump Tower Meeting

OR: "FAKING A MEETING"



- Disguised the true nature of the meeting his son, his son-in-law, Paul Manafort, and others had with Russian nationals offering dirt on Hillary Clinton, going so far as to alter his son's press release about the meeting to state that it had been about adoption policies. (II.G.2-3)

7. Don McGahn

OR: "INFERNAL SKULLDOGGERY
OF THE SPOTTY LIES"

But that would be a lie, sir.



Don McGahn
White House Counsel

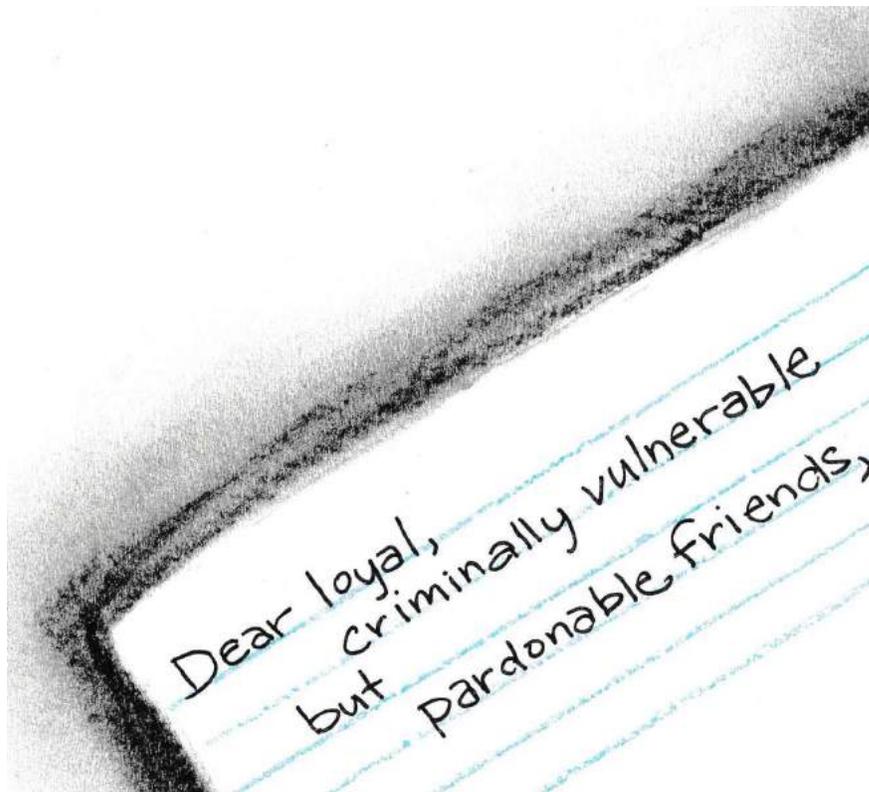
What's your point?



- Tried to get White House Counsel Don McGahn to deny [the true] reports that he had ordered McGahn to fire Jeff Sessions. (II.I.2)

8. Manafort, Flynn, et al.

OR: "THE 'I'M SCREWED' LETTERS"



- Sent messages to Russia investigation witnesses pressuring them in various ways not to cooperate with prosecutors. (II.J)

9. Michael Cohen

OR: "MAKING HIM AN OFFER
HE CAN'T REFUSE"

Nice little family you got there. It'd be
a shame if it burned to the ground.



Michael Cohen
former Trump lawyer

- Suggested to his attorney Michael Cohen that he would pardon him if he refused to cooperate with federal prosecutors. (II.K.4)
- Threatened him and his family after Cohen went ahead and cut a deal. (II.K.5)

10. Jeff Sessions

OR: "MAKING HIM AN OFFER
HE CAN'T REFUSE"

You're the worst lawyer
I've ever had!

I am NOT your personal
attorney.



Jeff Sessions
U.S. Attorney General

- Continued to pressure Jeff Sessions to un-recuse himself from the Russia investigation – and to open a new investigation against Hillary Clinton. (II.H.1)

You can't sock it to me!



[Narrator: We did.]

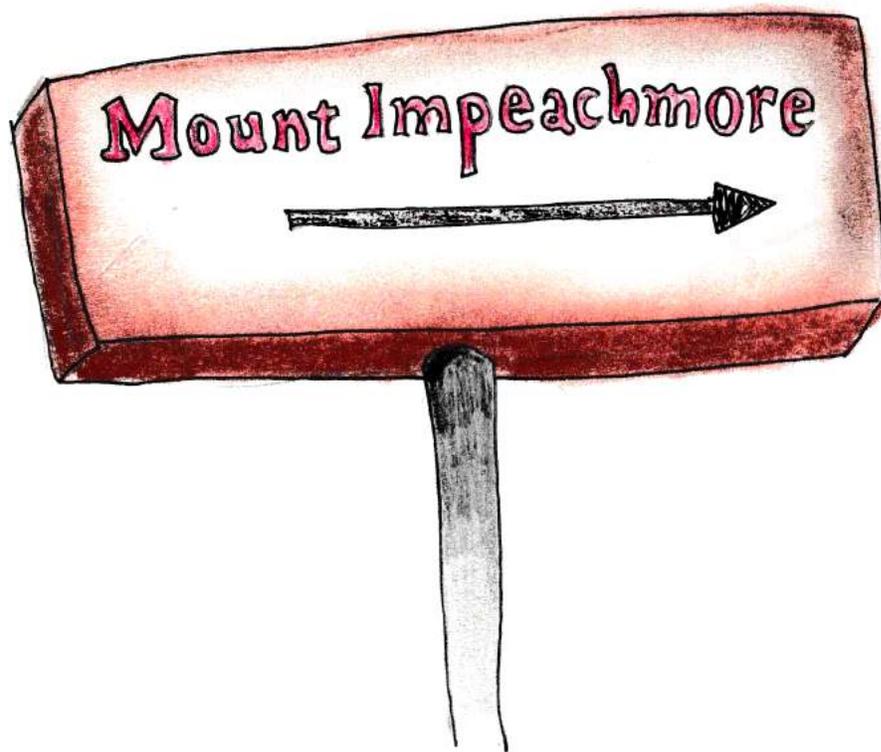
Having assembled the evidence for obstruction, Mueller did not go on to file charges or even make a pronouncement about Trump's guilt, abiding by a 1973 Department of Justice decision that a sitting President can't be charged with federal crimes.

“The Constitution requires a process other than the criminal justice system to formally accuse a sitting president of wrongdoing”

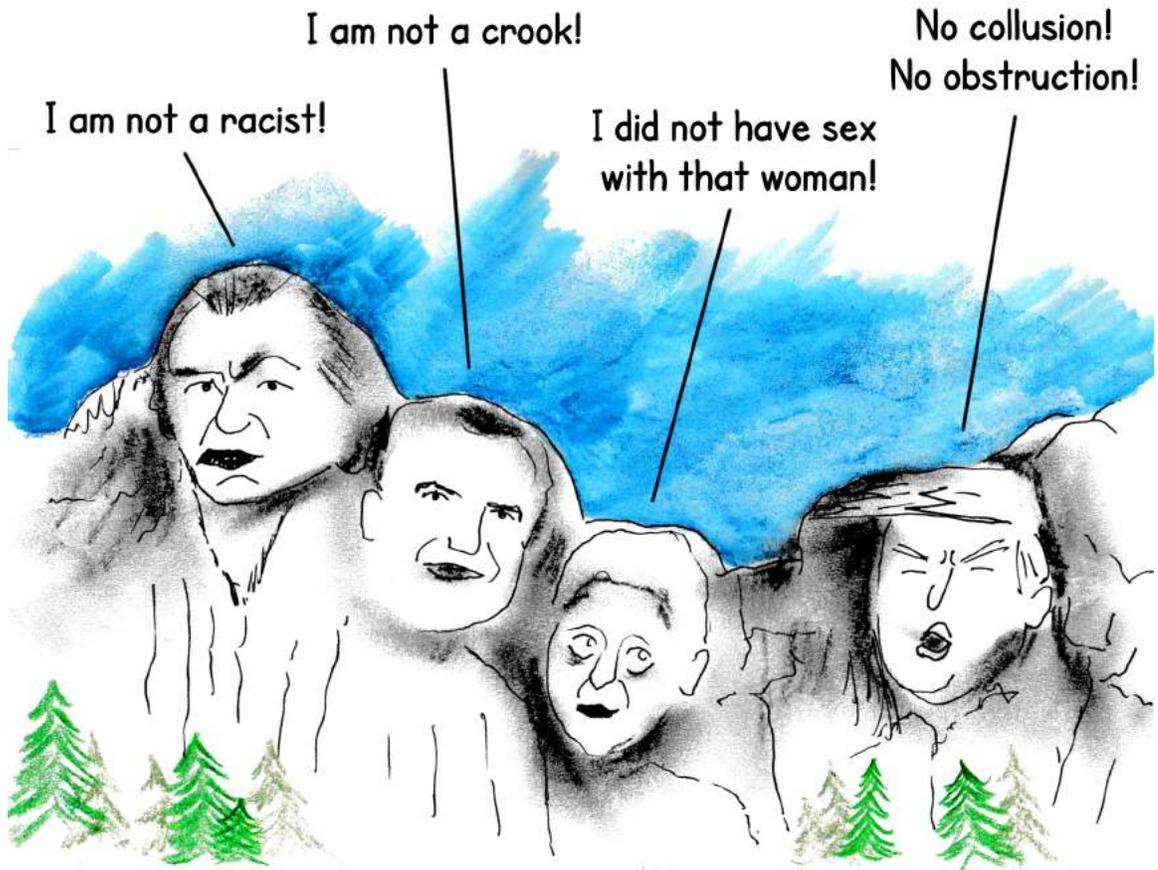
– Robert Mueller (May 29, 2019)

So Mueller did what he could. He made the obstruction case as thoroughly as possible, laying the groundwork for impeachment and / or future prosecutions. He hinted at impeachment by explaining that one reason he didn't make an explicit claim of guilt was that it could “preempt constitutional processes for addressing presidential misconduct.” (Introduction to Volume II)

Mueller then referred to impeachment again in his first (and, so far, only) public statement after releasing his report.



Because while a sitting President can't be indicted, he can certainly be impeached.





Many readers of the report, even libertarian Fox News legal analyst Andrew Napolitano and Republicans such as conservative commentator Bill Kristol and congressional representative Justin Amash, a founding member of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus*, believe that Donald Trump should be removed from office based on its findings.

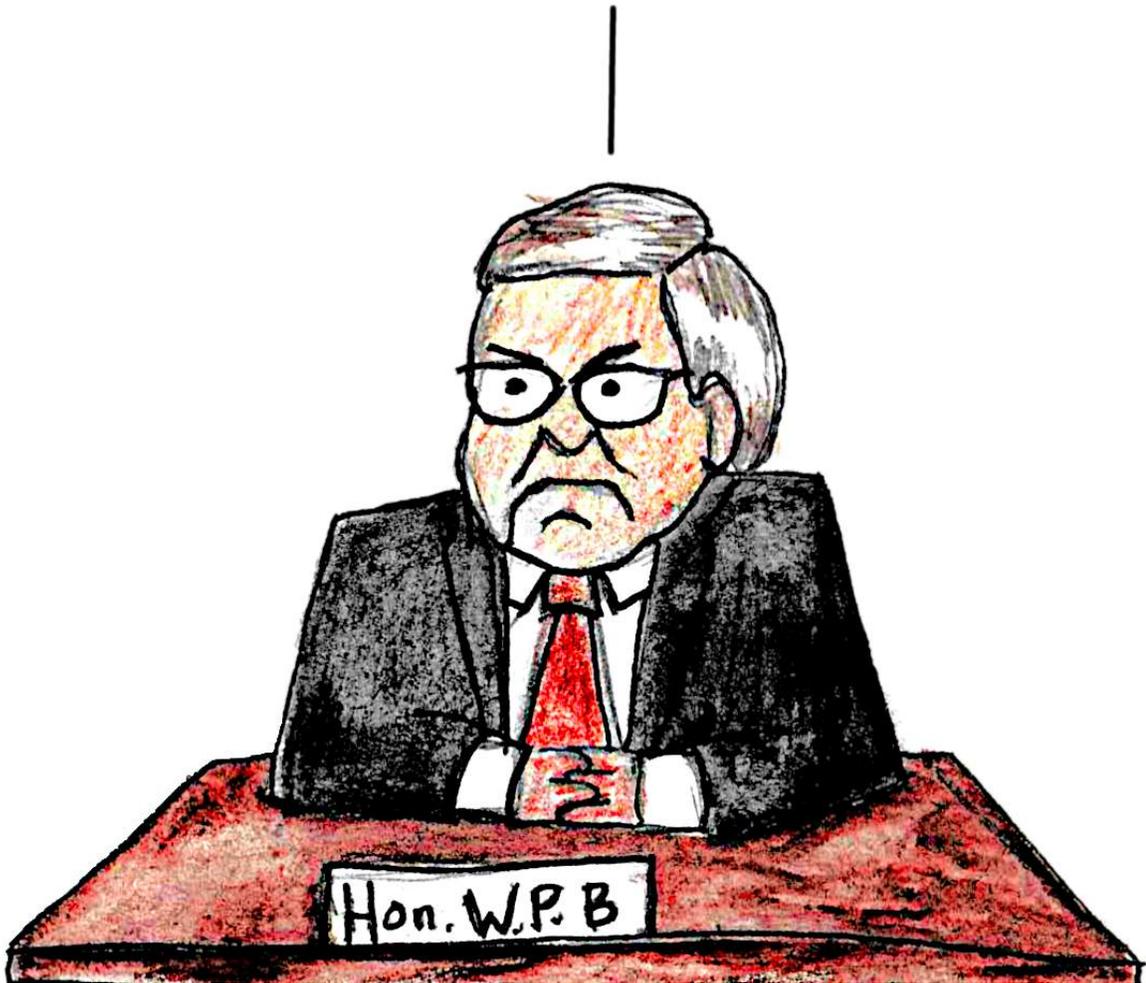
* Amash has since left or been ousted from the Freedom Caucus.

“Each of us believes that the conduct of President Trump described in Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report would, in the case of any other person not covered by the Office of Legal Counsel policy against indicting a sitting President, result in multiple felony charges for obstruction of justice.”

– Letter posted on Medium.com signed by
over 1000 former federal prosecutors
(go.trumpbert.com/obstruction-prosecutors)

As do a thousand former federal prosecutors, over 600 of whom were originally hired during Republican administrations.

No collusion!
No obstruction!



Attorney General William Barr, however, in his initial statement after receiving it, misrepresented the tenor of the report before it was released to the public.

“If we had had confidence the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so.”

– Robert Mueller (May 29, 2019)

But Barr was quickly corrected by Robert Mueller himself in a letter (which Barr later lied about) and then later in a public statement.



Don McGahn
White House Counsel

Defy all the subpoenas!



Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury

Withhold all my tax returns!



Meanwhile, the President has continued to obstruct further investigation into his possible crimes.

Dig up all the dirt
on my political enemies!



William Barr
Attorney General



I welcome all the foreign
interference!



George Stephanopoulos
ABC News

Moreover, he has declared – on national TV – that he would continue to accept foreign assistance in future campaigns.

And that's where we stand today, in June of 2019. The Mueller investigation produced 34 indictments and, so far, eight guilty pleas or convictions, including five associates of Donald Trump. The investigation cost a total of \$25 million, but gained the federal government \$48 million in the form of fines, seized assets, and the recovery of unpaid taxes.

	Watergate	Iran- Contra	Whitewater	Benghazi*	Russia
years	4	7	7	7 (so far**)	2
cost	\$26m	\$75m	\$57m	\$8m***	\$25m
cost in 2019 dollars****	\$135m	\$169m	\$84m	\$8m***	\$25m
Indictments	69	11	17	0	34
convictions/ immunity/ pleas/pardons	48	10	15	0	8 (so far)

* Ten separate investigations, culminating in the GOP House Select Committee investigation.

** FBI Benghazi investigation still ongoing.

*** Just for the House Select Committee investigation.

**** Based on the Consumer Price Index for the last or most recent year of the investigation.

FINAL FUN FACTS

- As long as Donald Trump is President, he can't be indicted for any federal crime.
- As soon as he's out of office, he can be prosecuted.
- If he gets elected to another four years as President, he could escape indictment for all acts of obstruction to date, since the statute of limitations for obstruction is five years, which will have elapsed by the time he's out of office (unless he commits more acts of obstruction or is removed from office before his second term is over).
- In the meantime, the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives can decide to launch impeachment proceedings against him, though it is the currently Republican-controlled Senate that would ultimately vote to acquit or convict, with a two-thirds vote required to remove him from office.
- If Trump is impeached and removed from office, or resigns voluntarily, he becomes vulnerable to criminal prosecution, unless he's granted immunity or pardoned.
- In addition to the issues around federal crimes, there are possible state-level charges brewing against him for crimes like tax and insurance fraud. It's unclear whether a president can be successfully prosecuted for state-level crimes while in office.



*Make
America
Great Again!*