

AFTER 14 YEARS, CONSPIRACY ARTIST JEROME CORSI CONTINUES TO SUCCESSFULLY YANK THE MEDIA'S CHAIN

Before I address Jerome Corsi's latest success at playing the media, let me review my theory of why Mueller's team is so interested in Corsi with respect to Stone (which they've been pursuing since March).

Jerome Corsi probably knew not just *that* WikiLeaks would release Podesta emails, but also what they contained

On October 6, 2016, Jerome Corsi renewed an attack on John Podesta first floated in a Peter Schweitzer and Steve Bannon report released on August 1 (and funded by Rebekah Mercer).

Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign manager, John Podesta, was on the executive board of a client of the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca, which is at the heart of the the Panama Papers investigation into massive global offshore money-laundering.

The company for which Podesta served as a board member, Joule, also received \$35 million from a Putin-connected Russian government fund at the same time then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spearheaded the transfer of U.S.

advanced technology, some with military uses, as part of her “reset” strategy with Russia, according to a report titled “From Russia With Money,” released in August by the Government Accountability Institute. “Clinton Cash” author Peter Schweizer is president of GAI, and Steve Bannon, the CEO of the Trump campaign, is a director.

The Russian entities that funneled money to Joule and its related companies, and ultimately to Podesta, include a controversial Russian investor with ties to the Russian government, Viktor Vekselberg, and his Renova Group, a Russian conglomerate with interests in oil, energy and telecommunication.

It was a remarkably prescient report! Just hours later, WikiLeaks would start releasing John Podesta’s emails, and would you know it!?, starting on October 11, those emails included documents pertaining to Podesta’s efforts to unwind his relationship with Joule. He and Roger Stone both returned to that attack on October 13, after WikiLeaks had released those files. And on October 17, Corsi finally got around to a post linking the released files to (claim to) substantiate the attack.

While that’s in no way proof, it certainly seems to suggest that either Corsi or Stone not only had advanced warning *that* WikiLeaks would release Podesta emails, but knew that those emails would include documents pertaining to Joule.

As it happens, though, Corsi and Stone spoke about Joule back in August, probably on August 14, before Stone predicted that it’d soon be Podestas’ time in the barrel. Corsi explained that conversation in March 2017, at a time when Stone was pushing Randy Credico to back his explanations for the Podesta comment, this way:

On Aug. 14, 2016, the New York Times reported that a secret ledger in Ukraine listed cash payments for Paul Manafort, a consultant to the Ukraine's former President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

When this article was published, I suggested to Roger Stone that the attack over Manafort's ties to Russia needed to be countered.

My plan was to publicize the Government Accountability Institute's report, "From Russia With Money," that documented how Putin paid substantial sums of money to both Hillary Clinton and John Podesta.

Putin must have wanted Hillary to win in 2016, if only because Russian under-the-table cash payments to the Clintons and to Podesta would have made blackmailing her as president easy.

On Aug. 14, 2016, I began researching for Roger Stone a memo that I entitled "Podesta."

Stone has explained whatever digital tracks and the timing of that conversation slightly differently, claiming first that it pertained to a reference to a Schweitzer piece, but probably currently relying on this piece.

If Stone and Corsi plotted on August 14 to return to the Joule attack after WikiLeaks released files on it, then that conversation would have shortly follow the trip to Italy in late July and early August that, according to Corsi, Mueller appears to believe is where Corsi learned about the Podesta emails.

But Corsi says – in spite of apparent emails in Mueller's possession proving otherwise – he figured out WikiLeaks would release Podesta's emails just by "forensic analysis."

"I connect the dots," he said. "I didn't need any source to tell me."

Corsi said he determined in August that WikiLeaks head Julian Assange had obtained Podesta's emails and was likely to release them in October – and he said several emails he sent in the summer of 2016 would confirm that fact. But he said his awareness was simply a logical deduction, not inside information from WikiLeaks.

[snip]

Corsi said that he had “sources” who had given him 1,000 pages of information over the summer of 2016 on how the Democratic Party's computers worked. He said he did a “forensic analysis” of those emails to infer that Podesta's were missing from the batch.

“Whoever was in that server, had to have seen Podesta's emails,” he said. “It was a guess, but it was a conclusion that Assange had Podesta's emails. ... He was going to release them in October. Assange always releases things strategically.”

Which brings us to where we are today. After twice getting the media all worked up over claims about plea deals, Corsi now says he is rejecting a plea deal on one count of perjury.

Matt Whitaker May Determine What Happens Next

It's not just that Corsi has succeeded in yanking the media's chain, twice setting off press tizzies closely covering the claims of a man whose job is getting the press to embrace elaborate lies. It's that Corsi's chain-yanking have occurred at key times in the Matt Whitaker era. Consider this timeline:

November 7: Trump fires Jeff Sessions and replaces him by the end of day with designated hatchet man Matt Whitaker

November 8: In hearing in Andrew Miller subpoena challenge, Michael Dreeben **lays out** what Mueller can do with and without Attorney General appointment, noting that subpoenaing a journalist requires AG approval

November 8: On his podcast, Corsi suggests something big is going down with Mueller

November 9: Corsi appears before the grand jury and doesn't give the answer – regarding how he learned that WikiLeaks would release John Podesta's emails – that prosecutors expected; they told him they were going to charge him with perjury

November 12: On his podcast, Corsi says he expects to be indicted; a huge media frenzy follows

November 13: The media frenzy continues until (he claims), moments before starting an MSNBC interview, his lawyer tells him to call it off

November 15: Trump **tweet** apparently reflects Corsi's claim of prosecutors yelling at him to give specific testimony they seek

November 19: In supplemental filing in Miller case, Mueller **says** he retains full authority of US Attorney until and unless appointing regulations get changed

November 23: Corsi goes to **the WaPo** (off the record), **AP**, and MSNBC (the latter two both on the record) to tell them he is in plea negotiations

November 26: Corsi announces he has been offered, but will reject, a plea deal to

one count of perjury, accuses Mueller of Gestapo tactics, and claims he will file a complaint with Whitaker

I've been wondering since November 9 whether Whitaker and Mueller had differences of opinion about what should happen with Jerome Corsi. We don't actually know, yet, what kind of role Whitaker has played in overseeing Mueller's investigation yet, partly because it's not clear whether he'd be read in before the conclusion of an ethics review that it's not at all clear he would pass (he can refuse to recuse anyway, but that will pose risks to his law license).

Still, it seems likely that, going forward, Whitaker will have an opportunity to weigh in on what happens to Corsi. If Mueller decides, once Corsi refuses a plea deal, to charge Corsi with that lie and perhaps others (or a role in a larger conspiracy), Whitaker may have an opportunity to veto it. And DOJ would presumably treat Corsi, a clear propagandist, but one with prior ties to the President, as a journalist.

To be clear, Corsi would be charged for lies to the grand jury. Even assuming he claimed he did so to protect a source, he'd be in a different position than (say) when James Risen refused to say anything about a source. He'd have already lied.

Still, by treating Corsi with heightened First Amendment privileges, Whitaker could add layers of review to any new charges (again, assuming anything Corsi says is true).

Meanwhile, Corsi has told multiple outlets that he wants to accuse Mueller of advising Corsi to lie to FINRA about pleading guilty.

Corsi has also added a new twist to the saga, claiming that he plans to file a complaint with Acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker over Mueller's team's alleged recommendation that he keep his plea deal a secret from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).

“FINRA requires by law that I immediately report anything that might affect my ability to hold securities licenses,” Corsi explained. “So I asked the special counsel’s team how they expected me to fulfill my legal obligation to FINRA if they want me to keep the plea deal a secret. And they said, ‘you don’t have to tell FINRA because this will all be under seal.’ So I told them I was going to file criminal charges against them with Whitaker, because they just advised me to commit a crime.” The special counsel’s office declined to comment.

By making claims that are probably bullshit and were probably made in front of his attorney, Corsi risks really screwing up his legal representation.

But all this is pretty obviously theater performed for two audience members: Donald Trump (who has already publicly responded) and Matt Whitaker (who believes in Bigfoot and time travel). So it may work!

Does Mueller need Corsi’s prosecution, or does he need his testimony?

Nevertheless, if Corsi serially lied to investigators, I would imagine Whitaker would eventually approve of charges against him.

But that may not be what Mueller wants (and Corsi may know that).

While it seems clear part of Corsi’s lies pertain to how he learned that WikiLeaks had and would release Podesta’s emails, Corsi told Nashsa Bertrand that the lie pertained to an email he sent to Roger Stone telling him to go see Assange.

Corsi told me that he emailed Stone in 2016 (he didn't specify what month) telling him to "go see Assange"—an email that prosecutors showed him during an interview earlier this year that Corsi apparently had not voluntarily produced. "I couldn't remember any of my 2016 emails," Corsi said. "I hadn't looked at them. So they let me amend my testimony, but now they want to charge me for the initial day [of my interview with prosecutors] when I said I didn't remember that email. I won't plead guilty to it."

Corsi's story doesn't make sense – not least because if this really were about his original interview, it would be charged as False Statements, not Perjury – but if what Mueller needs is an account of Corsi's August communications with Stone, then Corsi's current stunt may actually achieve part of its objective.

Mueller probably doesn't want to charge Corsi – and certainly not Corsi alone – because he's such a gaslighter the trial will be a pain in the ass (and while he's got a credible lawyer, he obviously doesn't have any control over Corsi's stunts). What Mueller probably wants is the testimony he needs to be able to charge Stone as part of a larger conspiracy.

The bigger question, though, is whether Mueller needs that testimony before he takes his next investigative steps.