

THE MANY LIES AND PREVARICATIONS OF BILL BARR

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Here's a transcript of Bill Barr's speech, once again spinning the Mueller Report. Effectively, what he did was pretend that "collusion" was the same thing as conspiracy, and having done so judge that the President didn't obstruct justice because he was frustrated.

Repeats the sentence fragment without giving us the sentence

In Barr's memo, he quoted a sentence fragment to claim that Mueller didn't find any efforts to conspire with Russia. But then, as now, Barr only quoted part of the full sentence.

As you will see, the Special Counsel's report states that his "investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities."

We don't know what the first half of that sentence says, and it may well be damning.

Turns Trump campaign's unknowing coordination into no collusion

In the paragraph on the IRA, Barr emphasizes that no Trump people knowingly coordinated with the IRA trolls.

But the Special Counsel found no evidence that any Americans – including anyone associated with the Trump campaign – conspired or coordinated with the Russian government or the IRA in carrying out this illegal scheme. Indeed, as the report states, “[t]he investigation did not identify evidence that any U.S. persons knowingly or intentionally coordinated with the IRA’s interference operation.” Put another way, the Special Counsel found no “collusion” by any Americans in the IRA’s illegal activity.

We know that three Trump campaign officials unknowingly coordinated with the IRA’s interference operation. That’s not knowing collusion. But Barr overstates the Trump campaign innocence.

Turns no conspiring on the hack into no collusion

One of the most egregious instances of Barr’s word games comes when he turns the fact that Trump didn’t help hack the DNC into “no collusion.”

But again, the Special Counsel’s report did not find any evidence that members of the Trump campaign or anyone associated with the campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its hacking operations. In other words, there was no evidence of Trump campaign “collusion” with the Russian government’s hacking.

No one ever thought that Trump’s flunkies hacked the DNC. But Trump did encourage it. Which is collusion, according to some definitions of the goddamned meaningless term.

Cleaves Trump of “collusion” because Roger Stone’s “collusion” was legal

This passage, which talks about the publication of the WikiLeaks documents, engages in further word games.

The Special Counsel’s investigation also examined Russian efforts to publish stolen emails and documents on the internet. The Special Counsel found that, after the GRU disseminated some of the stolen materials through its own controlled entities, DCLeaks and Guccifer 2.0, the GRU transferred some of the stolen materials to Wikileaks for publication. Wikileaks then made a series of document dumps. The Special Counsel also investigated whether any member or affiliate of the Trump campaign encouraged or otherwise played a role in these dissemination efforts. Under applicable law, publication of these types of materials would not be criminal unless the publisher also participated in the underlying hacking conspiracy. Here too, the Special Counsel’s report did not find that any person associated with the Trump campaign illegally participated in the dissemination of the materials.

Even Donald Trump “encouraged” the dissemination of the WikiLeaks documents. But the Stone indictment shows that he had some success at optimizing the release of the emails. Here, Barr shifts to emphasizing that the Trump campaign involvement in the dissemination was not illegal – effectively admitting that the Trump campaign “colluded,” but then saying because it wasn’t illegal collusion it’s no big deal.

Falsely claims that no Trump associate conspired with a Russian

Barr summarizes Mueller's investigation into the links between Russians and Trump's associates by claiming none of them engaged in a conspiracy to violate US law involving Russian linked persons.

Finally, the Special Counsel investigated a number of "links" or "contacts" between Trump Campaign officials and individuals connected with the Russian government during the 2016 presidential campaign. After reviewing those contacts, the Special Counsel did not find any conspiracy to violate U.S. law involving Russia-linked persons and any persons associated with the Trump campaign.

This is outright false. Paul Manafort pled guilty to a conspiracy to money launder and violate FARA; Konstantin Kilimnik was involved in that. That conspiracy went through 2016. And Kilimnik was named a co-conspirator with Manafort on his 2018 witness tampering.

Leans on "collusion" as basis for his obstruction analysis

At the beginning of Barr's discussion of obstruction of justice, he relies on "collusion," not conspiracy.

After finding no underlying collusion with Russia, the Special Counsel's report goes on to consider whether certain actions of the President could amount to obstruction of the Special Counsel's investigation.

Admits some of Trump's acts amount to obstruction

Barr says that he and Rosenstein disagreed that some of the instances of obstruction Mueller analyzed were obstruction.

Falsely claims that the House Judiciary Committee doesn't have a constitutionally proper claim to grand jury information

Finally, then Barr pretends that by letting members of Congress access the report – save grand jury material – that is legally sufficient.

Given the limited nature of the redactions, I believe that the publicly released report will allow every American to understand the results of the Special Counsel's investigation. Nevertheless, in an effort to accommodate congressional requests, we will make available to a bipartisan group of leaders from several Congressional committees a version of the report with all redactions removed except those relating to grand-jury information. **Thus, these members of Congress will be able to see all of the redacted material for themselves – with the limited exception of that which, by law, cannot be shared.** [my emphasis]

The House Judiciary Committee has a constitutionally proper claim to that grand jury material to conduct an impeachment inquiry.

Claiming that it cannot be shared legally is both historically and legally false.