

JIM JORDAN'S BUBBLE HAS ALLOWED HIM TO REMAIN PAINFULLY STUPID ABOUT THE MUELLER INVESTIGATION

Politico has a piece on Republican plans to blow up Robert Mueller's testimony later this month with stupid questions. It's a fair piece; it even quotes Louie Gohmert calling Mueller an asshole, in as many words.

The Texas congressman added that his reading of the special counsel's report did little to temper his long history of animosity for the former FBI director: "It reinforced the anal opening that I believe Mueller to be."

But it misses an opportunity when it presents what Jim Jordan imagines will be a doozy of a question with only a minimal fact check.

But Republicans preparing over the next two-plus weeks to question Mueller say they have their own points they hope to drive home to Americans as well. Several indicated they intend to press Mueller on when he first determined he lacked evidence to charge Americans with conspiring with Russia – insinuating, without evidence, that he allowed suspicions to linger long after he had shifted his focus to the obstruction of justice investigation.

"The obvious question is the one that everyone in the country wants to know: when did you first know there was no conspiracy, coordination or collusion?" said Jordan, one of the Republicans'

fiercest investigators. "How much longer did it take Bob Mueller to figure that out? Did he intentionally wait until after 2018 midterms, or what?"

Mueller emphasized in his report that he did not make a finding on "collusion," since it's not a legal term, and that his decision not to bring charges didn't mean he found no evidence of them.

If Jim Jordan, who has been spending most of his time as a legislator in the last year investigating this investigation, were not so painfully stupid, he would know not only that not "everyone in the country" feels the need to know when Mueller finalized a decision about conspiracy, but that attentive people *already do know that Bob Mueller wasn't the one who decided to wait out the mid-terms.*

The Mueller team told Amy Berman Jackson that Paul Manafort had breached his plea agreement on November 26, 2018. His last grand jury appearance – on November 2 – did not show up in his breach discussion (meaning he may have told the truth, including about Trump's personal involvement in optimizing the WikiLeaks releases). But in his October 26 grand jury appearance, he tried to hide the fact that he continued to pursue a plan to carve up Ukraine well into 2018, and continued to generally lie about what that plan to carve up Ukraine had to do with winning Michigan and Wisconsin, such that Manafort took time away from running Trump's campaign on August 2, 2016 to discuss both of them with his co-conspirator Konstantin Kilimnik. Mueller never did determine what that August 2 meeting was about or what Kilimnik and Viktor Boyarkin did with the Trump polling data Manafort was sharing with them. But the delay in determining that Manafort's obstruction had succeeded was set by Manafort, not Mueller.

And until November 26, prosecutors still hoped to get Jerome Corsi to stop lying to them about how he and Roger Stone got advanced notice of

John Podesta's stolen emails – to say nothing about why Stone was talking to someone “about phishing with John Podesta.” Indeed, the government obtained a search warrant against Stone in February 2019 – possibly the one on February 13 to search multiple devices – to investigate hacking allegations. If that warrant is the February 2019 one targeting Stone, the devices likely came in the search of his homes on January 25 of this year.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump refused to answer questions – all the questions he answered were about conspiracy, and most of his answers were non-responsive – until November 20, 2018. His answers about the Trump Tower Moscow deal were worse than non-responsive: they replicated the lies for which Michael Cohen is currently sitting in prison. Then, in December and January, Trump and Rudy Giuliani made comments that made it clear Trump's answers were willful lies. Mueller offered Trump the opportunity to clarify his testimony, but he declined.

In light of the President's public statements following Cohen's guilty plea that he “decided not to do the project,” this Office again sought information from the President about whether he participated in any discussions about the project being abandoned or no longer pursued, including when he “decided not to do the project,” who he spoke to about that decision, and what motivated the decision. 1057 The Office also again asked for the timing of the President's discussions with Cohen about Trump Tower Moscow and asked him to specify “what period of the campaign” he was involved in discussions concerning the project. 1058 In response, the President's personal counsel declined to provide additional information from the President and stated that “the President has fully answered the questions at issue.” 1059

1057 1/23/19 Letter, Special Counsel's Office to President's Personal Counsel.

1058 1/23/ 19 Letter, Special Counsel's Office to President's Personal Counsel.

1059 2/6/ 19 Letter, President's Personal Counsel to Special Counsel's Office.

In short, the public record makes it clear that the answer to Jordan's question – when Mueller made a determination about any conspiracy charges – could not have happened until after the election. But the person who dictated that timing, more than anyone else, was Trump himself, who was refusing to tell the truth to Mueller as recently as February 6.

This is all in the public record (indeed, Trump's role in the delay is described in the Mueller Report, which Jordan might have known had he read it). The fact that Jordan doesn't know the answer – much less believes that his already-answered question is a zinger – is a testament to what a locked bubble he exists in, where even the most basic details about the investigation itself, rather than the fevered dreams Jordan has about it, don't seep in.

Jordan should branch out beyond the spoon-fed journalists from whom he got this question, because even in its original incarnation, the question was utterly inconsistent with the public record.

When did you determine that there was no conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia?

Some congressional Republicans have asserted that Mueller figured out early on in his investigation – which started on May 17, 2017 – that there was no conspiracy or collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian government.

Mueller's report said that prosecutors were unable to establish that the

campaign conspired with Russia, but the report did not go into detail about when that conclusion was reached.

Don't get me wrong: I'm sure Jordan is going to pose unanswerable questions that will feed conspiracists (which is one of the reasons I was somewhat sympathetic for Mueller's preference for a closed hearing). But it's only within the closed bubble that can't be pierced by obvious facts that such questions are legitimate questions.

As I disclosed last July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.