

THREE QUESTIONS NOT ASKED OF STEVE BANNON

The Roger Stone trial is done for the week, with Randy Credico getting through his testimony (though probably without substantiating the witness tampering charge tied to him), with Margaret Kunstler confirming that Credico had never provided information from Assange to Stone through her, and with a very short appearance from Steve Bannon.

Bannon's appearance was most interesting, in my opinion, for what he wasn't asked. Here's CNN's coverage.

Prosecutor Michael Marando asked Bannon what he made of Stone's August 18 email – introduced in Aaron Zelinsky's opening – telling Bannon, ““I do know how to win this but it ain't pretty.” Bannon responded by calling Stone some lame euphemism for “rat-fucker,” and observed that Stone is highly experienced in such things. But Bannon was *not* asked whether there was any follow-up to the email. That's particularly interesting given the possibility that it pertains to another investigation, albeit one not related to the core Russian issues.

As expected, Marando asked Bannon about his emails to Roger Stone on October 4, 2016.

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

FROM: Steve Bannon

TO: Roger Stone

EMAIL:

What was that this morning???

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

FROM: Roger Stone

TO: Steve Bannon

EMAIL:

Fear. Serious security concern. He thinks they are going to kill him and

the London police are standing done.

However –a load every week going forward.

Roger stone

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

FROM: Steve Bannon

TO: Roger Stone

EMAIL:

He didn't cut deal w/ clintons???

Marando used Bannon's request to Stone as a way to premise that Bannon believed that Stone was the campaign point person on any outreach to WikiLeaks.

But Bannon wasn't asked about the last email in that thread, which asked Bannon to tell Rebecca Mercer to send him some money. That's significant, because the government wants to show that Stone lied to HPSCI about discussing his dark money shenanigans with the campaign (but that he cleaned that lie up). Since that exchange amounts to Stone telling Trump's campaign manager what he was up to, I had thought Bannon might be asked to elaborate on that. He was not.

Finally, Bannon was not asked about his response to an email Paul Manafort sent to Jared Kushner and David Bossie on November 5, 2016 about how to "secure the victory."

Later, in a November 5, 2016 email to Kushner entitled "Securing the Victory," Manafort stated that he was "really feeling good about our prospects on Tuesday and focusing on preserving the victory," and that he was concerned the Clinton Campaign would respond to a loss by "mov[ing] immediately to discredit the [Trump] victory and claim voter fraud and cyber-fraud, including the claim that the Russians have hacked into the voting machines and tampered with the results."

Bannon responded to that email by saying, (PDF 258)

We need to avoid this guy like the plague

They are going to try and say the Russian worked with wiki leaks to give this victory to us

Paul is nice guy but can't let word out he is advising us

Of course, this is the Roger Stone trial, not any of Paul Manafort's multiple trials. So it's unsurprising that this didn't come up. But, particularly given the way it reflected a tie between Russia, WikiLeaks, and Manafort, it might have.

Especially given that, when Bannon was asked about this on a February 14, 2018, he *appears* to have invoked Stone in his not entirely truthful answer.

Candidate Trump never said to Bannon that he was in contact with [5 letter name redacted for ongoing proceeding] or Manafort. Bannon knew they were going to win, and in this email he wanted to avoid Manafort because Bannon believed that if people could link them to Manafort, they could then try to link them to Russia.

That redacted name could not be Gates, the other 5-letter name associated with Manafort, because he remained on the campaign after Manafort left. And the FOIA exemption is most consistent with a Stone redaction.

In other words, a month after Bannon had the exchange about WikiLeaks with Roger Stone that *did* show up in the trial, he tied Stone, Manafort, WikiLeaks, and Russia together in his mind.

None of this (besides, I guess, the lack of

follow-up on the August 18 email) is particularly surprising. But it is notable that Bannon wasn't asked about a range of tangential issues, even issues that will be aired in different ways at the trial.