

# BACK CHANNEL: HOW SEAN HANNITY CAME TO BELIEVE “EVERY WORD [ASSANGE] SAYS”

In a pre-hearing hearing in London today, a lawyer for Julian Assange said they'd call a witness who would testify that Julian Assange was offered a pardon if he would say that Russia wasn't behind the 2016 hack.

This has led to people discovering for the first time the abundant evidence that Assange and the Trump Administration were discussing pardons in a bunch of different contexts. They weren't all, at all, an exchange for Assange's false testimony about his ties to Russia. That's just the only legally convenient one Assange can mention, because the others involve extortion (either a quid pro quo for the initial campaign dirt, or an offer to limit the damage of the Vault 7 leak in exchange for immunity) that would easily reach the bar for extradition.

As I've noted repeatedly, one of the most interesting questions Robert Mueller failed to get Trump to answer in good faith pertained to pardon discussions starting even before the inauguration.

Did you have any discussions prior to January 20, 2017, regarding a potential pardon or other action to benefit Julian Assange? If yes, describe who you had the discussion(s) with, when, and the content of the discussion(s).

Trump's answer did not cover the transition, when – testimony from his trial made clear – Roger Stone was already working on a pardon.

I do not recall having had any discussion during the campaign regarding a pardon or action to benefit Julian

Assange.

The record shows that discussions of an Assange pardon – for any of a variety of reasons – continued from late 2016 through early 2018.

But now that Assange is preparing to unpack one point of blackmail he has against Trump – and given the abundant effort we’ve seen that various people (including but not limited to Paul Manafort) use Sean Hannity as a back channel to the President – it’s time for folks to reconsider the Sean Hannity interview of Julian Assange from early January, 2017, just days after Roger Stone was known to be pursuing a pardon for Assange.