

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE STEVE BANNON?

Axios reported that PardonPalooza would accelerate yesterday. But it didn't happen. Not yet, at least.

I wonder if that's because Trump got new visibility on his own lingering jeopardy from the Mueller investigation.

There's a section of the Mueller Report that got declassified in the last batch which may explain why Jerome Corsi wasn't charged. In advance of three people whose prosecution was declined – which definitely includes KT McFarland, along with two others (Erik Prince or Sam Clovis may be one, George Nader may be the other) – the report explains,

We also considered three other individuals interviews—redacted—but do not address them here because they are involved in aspects of ongoing investigations or active prosecutions to which their statements to this office may be relevant.

Corsi obviously lied to Mueller, but his lies served, in part, to support the head fake the Mueller Report used to address how Roger Stone optimized the Podesta files.

Another of those liars could be Paul Manafort.

But the third may be Steve Bannon, who told a rolling series of lies that over time approached the truth, at least about some issues. Bannon even tried to lie again to back off his grand jury testimony in advance of the Roger Stone trial.

Bannon would be interesting for several reasons. Bannon knew about Stone's interactions with "WikiLeaks" even before he formally joined the

campaign. Bannon was a key player in setting up the fall 2016 meeting with Egypt, which preceded what the government thinks could have been a foreign bribe that kept the campaign afloat (indeed, one thing Bannon seems to have *always* lied about was his work with George Papadopoulos on that).

But most of all, Bannon was the fourth witness – with the others being Mike Flynn, KT McFarland, and Jared Kushner – to Trump’s interactions with Russia during the Transition four years ago. He was, with Jared, the person who most consistently used his personal email to conduct discussions of back channels with Russia (though all four took measures to keep their actions hidden from the Obama Administration and other Transition team members).

And Bannon was, for testimony before HPSCI the transcript of which got shared with Mueller’s team shortly before they closed up shop, scripted to deny any discussion of sanctions (among other things). You could get a clear understanding of what the White House was trying to deny by the wording of the questions.

Mueller’s team would have had this script in time for Bannon’s grand jury appearance in January 2019. We know one thing that Bannon was asked about, and begrudgingly told the truth about, pertained to the campaign’s enthusiasm about WikiLeaks (something about which he had lied in the past and tried to again). But we don’t know what else he got asked; Stone’s prosecutors got just the part pertaining to the Stone prosecution unsealed.

At the time of his grand jury testimony and until quite recently, Bannon was represented by Bill Burck. At least with Don McGahn, whom Burck also represented, Burck did not share details of his testimony with Trump’s lawyers. We know that because Trump was blind-sided when he learned about the extent of McGahn’s testimony. If that’s true of Bannon as well, then it would mean that grand jury appearance has been a blind spot for Trump and his lawyers.

Until now. After Bannon threatened Chris Wray and Anthony Fauci with execution, Burck fired Bannon as a client. Bannon recently hired Robert Costello to represent him in his Build the Wall fraud case. On top of being the guy who brokered a pardon to Michael Cohen in an attempt to silence him, Costello's also Rudy's personal lawyer. So Costello now has privilege with both Bannon and Rudy, and Rudy has privilege (by dint of being Trump's defense attorney) with Trump.

The old gang's back together.

Thing is, *if* Bannon told the truth about sanctions in that grand jury appearance, it'll make it a lot easier to unwind a bunch of expected pardons, because Bannon's testimony could be used to push Flynn, McFarland, Jared, and Trump himself to tell the truth about what they tried with Russia four years ago, exposing each to a fresh perjury charge they would no longer be pardoned for. Even if Biden's Attorney General was disinterested in that, I expect there to be more transparency about these issues going forward.

That makes Bannon one of the most interesting, if not the most interesting, pardon candidates, because he knows where all the bodies are buried, but he also told the truth, once.