

THREE THINGS: UGLY GOES CLEAN TO THE BONE [UPDATE-1]

[NB: As always, check the byline. Updates will appear at the bottom. Thanks. /~Rayne]

Friday we got badly wanted news; we wanted it badly enough we didn't blink at its arrival in the late Friday afternoon news dump zone.

But it wasn't enough. It was only the start, a mere teaser.

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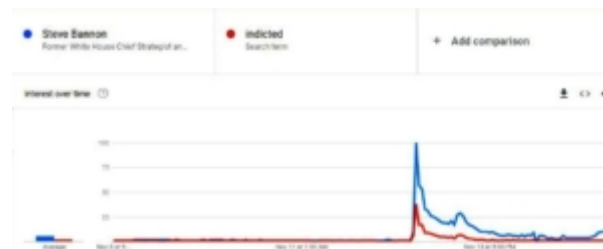
At 3:53 p.m. last Friday, the Department of Justice tweeted the indictment news:

Stephen K. Bannon Indicted for Contempt of Congress

Two Charges Filed for Failing to Honor House Subpoena From Select Committee Investigating Jan. 6 Capitol Breach
<https://t.co/4SxgGiuLNx?amp=1>

3:53 PM · Nov 12, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

The internet was paying attention:



...even if Steve Bannon hadn't been.

The news feed at the bottom of Bannon's podcast reads "Federal Grand Jury Indicts Steve Bannon" as Bannon promotes his guest's podcast

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/FEB1QPpUYAKLVs2?format=jpg&name=small>

6:01 PM · Nov 12, 2021 · Twitter for

iPhone

Rather hubristic to carry on as if he didn't expect to be indicted, but then many of us were beginning to think it would never happen.

Bannon is supposed to surrender himself today, which may be a bit of a circus since Bannon now has a new attorney, David Schoen. Schoen was one of Trump's impeachment attorneys in 2020.

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The well-meaning sages who insisted things were under control – it was a good sign it was taking nearly a month to indict Bannon, don't be like deplorables, blah-blah-blah – all had their say.

But which is it?

Dear @tribelaw – with respect, you should ease up on your former student, Merrick Garland. Three weeks is actually very fast when it comes to something as consequential as indicting a former senior White House official. We want prosecutors to be careful and thoughtful, not hasty.

<https://twitter.com/tribelaw/status/1459309628236386307>

9:02 PM · Nov 13, 2021 · Twitter Web App

These things just need more time because DOJ must be cautious?

See who signed this indictment? DC USAO Matthew Graves, who was sworn in on Friday, Nov. 5. Before then, he couldn't be briefed on the Bannon case or review evidence. Tuesday, Nov. 8 was an election day. Yesterday, of course, was a federal holiday. Pretty fast work, I would say.

<https://twitter.com/rgoodlaw/status/1459265746337472513>

5:48 PM · Nov 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Or these things just needed this one person who wasn't approved as DC-US Attorney until October 28 and sworn in more than a week later on November 5 to do the thing – which, by the way, took one week from oath to indictment?

Because it sure looks like the entirety of the House January 6 committee's ability to wield its inherent powers on intransigent witnesses was completely dependent on the absence/presence of a single Biden appointee which some jerk like Sen. Ted Cruz could have held up the way he is currently holding our foreign policy hostage with holds on State Department nominees.

Are we supposed to accept with a pat on our heads that our democracy yet again depended on one person's role?

If the DC-US Attorney were to become incapacitated at any time when the January 6 committee refers a contempt charge to DOJ, are we supposed to accept the platitudes "this takes time" or "don't be a deplorable" when nothing happens?

What kind of government continuity is this?

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Which brings us to the problem of former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows who received communications both Thursday and Friday from the chair of the January 6 committee about his lack of response to a subpoena issued by the committee on September 23.

Using false or misleading claims, Meadows had attempted to spur the DOJ to investigate election fraud claims including a bizarre theory that unknown persons located in Italy used military technology and satellites to remotely switch votes from Trump to Biden. These claims were sent to then-Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen between December and January – after the 2020 election but before the January 6 insurrection.

Meadows was supposed to appear before the

committee on October 15 to answer questions about these claims and his role in pushing them toward the DOJ, a week after he was supposed to have furnished documents requested by the committee in relation to these false election fraud claims.

The committee's chair sent a letter last Thursday to Meadows's attorney:

NEW: Chairman @BennieGThompson responds to Mark Meadows's attorney regarding Mr. Meadows's refusal to comply with a Select Committee subpoena:
<https://january6th.house.gov/sites/democrats.january6th.house.gov/files/20211111%20Terwilliger%20Letter.pdf>

6:41 PM · Nov 11, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

And on Friday the committee emphasized it's going to use the tools available to it to obtain compliance with the subpoena – or else.

Mr. Meadows's actions today—choosing to defy the law—will force the Select Committee to consider pursuing contempt or other proceedings to enforce the subpoena.
<https://january6th.house.gov/news/press-releases/thompson-cheney-statement-mark-meadows-0>

4:41 PM · Nov 12, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Meadow's attorney sent a massively ballsy op-ed to the Washington Post as a rebuttal to the committee's subpoena:

Opinion: In abandoning executive privilege, Biden rejects 200 years of history

George J. Terwilliger III is a partner at McGuireWoods LLP in Washington and previously served as deputy attorney

general.

As counsel for former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, I was surprised and disappointed to receive a letter Thursday informing me that the Biden administration will be the first in history not to resist a congressional subpoena for testimony from a senior White House aide. ...

WaPo treated this like any other conservative's op-ed; no caveat this op-ed may be tampering with an investigation.

Rather interesting how Terwilliger was able to get a 789-word op-ed published at 3:30 p.m. on the same day the January 6 committee issued its letter. This isn't the first time Terwilliger has opined in WaPo about someone involved in the January 6 insurrection though Terwilliger's last op-ed was a defense of former AG Bill Barr's interference in Roger Stone's sentencing. Can't have the GOP's senior ratfucker excessively punished during an election season after all.

Former Nixon White House counsel John Dean didn't think much of Terwilliger's op-ed:

Meadows' lawyer is wrong. This is bad history. Nixon did nothing to block or control subpoenas of his top aides. More impt: No POTUS can stop anyone from testifying and to attack them for doing so is a crime. Meadows is protecting HIMSELF! Then, Donald!
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/11/13/abandoning-executive-privilege-biden-rejects-200-years-history/>

8:43 PM · Nov 14, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

I think I'd put my money behind Dean as to which of these two attorneys has a better grasp on the

limits of executive privilege.

But it gets worse for Meadows since the soon-to-be-released book about the January 6 insurrection by reporter Jonathan Karl revealed yet another memo outlining steps to effect the autogolpe overthrowing the election.

Meadows had forwarded by email to then-VP Mike Pence's chief of staff Marc Short a memo prepared by attorney Jennifer Ellis outlining the steps Pence needed to take to avoid certifying the election for Biden until a new alternate slate of electors for Trump could be introduced from just enough states to flip the election to Trump.

A rather pathetic carrot offered to Pence with the stick to follow on the day of the insurrection – a threat of violence and possible assassination by mob because Pence didn't take the memo as a White House-approved order.

Looks like the number of questions Meadows must now answer has grown even longer.

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The title of this post comes from an aphorism attributed to a favorite writer, Dorothy Parker: "Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes clean to the bone." Meadows may be more physically attractive and better dressed than Bannon but they're both deeply ugly people who represent an existential threat to American democracy.

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UPDATE-1 – 10:00 P.M. ET –

Yeesh.

he looks like the drunk, disowned uncle
that got told to leave the family
reunion #ByeSteve
https://pbs.twimg.com/ext_tw_video_thumb/1460333203776884736/pu/img/W8A8BIW6s7uRpwM1?format=jpg&name=small

3:30 PM · Nov 15, 2021 · Twitter for
iPhone

For a guy who was simply asked to appear before a House committee to answer some questions about what happened leading up to and on the day of January 6, this guy sure wants his audience to believe he's being uniquely singled out for harassment by a president who both believes in the equal but separate powers inherent to each branch of government, and who believes the DOJ should be independent of the White House. Perhaps Bannon's projecting since he was just fine with Trump's DOJ acting like his personal police force.

Bannon could have just shown up, told the committee on a question by question basis, "I can't answer that because my lawyer said it's under executive privilege as Trump has claimed," and simply gone about his day, coming off cool and collected like someone with nothing to hide.

But no, Bannon has to make a big scene because it's a gift for more money; you know when he said "Stand by," he will likely elaborate soon saying, "Stand by, because I'm going to ask you for help soon," and then he'll point to a link for donations for his legal fund.

Wow, he doesn't even need to claim he's building a border wall this time.