

TOM BARRACK ACQUITTED ON ALL COUNTS

According to multiple outlets, a jury just acquitted Tom Barrack on all counts – both the charges that he acted as a foreign agent of Mohammed bin Zayed and the charges that he lied to obstruct the investigation.

Barrack (and his aide Matthew Grimes) were really well lawyered throughout this case and succeeded in excluding a good deal of critical evidence, including evidence proving venue in EDNY. It's not inconceivable that the jury acquitted on venue alone.

Barrack argued, at length on the stand, that he did what he did because he wanted to, not because he was acting at the behest of Mohammed bin Zayed. He was charged under 18 USC 951 (not FARA), which covers a gray zone of conduct that really gets to motive.

I'm most interested in why the jury acquitted on the false statements charges, which included basic questions about whether Barrack had downloaded WhatsApp. His attorneys did a lot of work to question the FBI agent and the production of the 302s from the 2019 FBI interview in question.

At some point down the road, I hope to read the transcripts to get a better sense of what happened (the coverage from the trial was remarkably thin). But it's a testament to what can happen when DOJ charges an aggressive case against someone with good lawyers.