

RYBICKI, JAMES E. (DO) (FBI)

From: COMEY, JAMES B. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: Saturday, January 07, 2017 1:42 PM
To: MCCABE, ANDREW G. (DO)(FBI); BAKER, JAMES A. (OGC) (FBI); RYBICKI, JAMES E. (DO) (FBI)
Cc: COMEY, JAMES B. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: My notes from private session with PE on 1/6/17 -- ~~SECRET//ORCON/NOFORN~~

Classification: ~~SECRET//ORCON/NOFORN~~

Classified By: Director
Derived From: FBI NSIC dated 20130301
Declassify On: 20271231
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What follows are notes I typed in the vehicle immediately upon exiting Trump Tower on 1/6/17. Although I wrote this less than five minutes after the meeting and have tried to use actual words spoken, including quoting directly in some places, I have not used quotation marks throughout because my purpose was to capture the substance of what was said. I am not sure of the proper classification here so have chosen SECRET. Please let me know if it should be higher or lower than that.

Notes begin here:

During my briefing on the [redacted] material in the main body of the meeting, I mentioned the derog files on [redacted]

[redacted] I said we were doing that.

At the conclusion of our session, the COS asked whether there is anything we haven't mentioned that they should know or that might come out. I said there was something that Clapper wanted me to speak to the PE about alone or in a very small group. COS asked whether the group of COS, VPE, and PE was okay or whether I wanted to be alone. I told him it was up to the PE, who quickly said that he and I would meet alone.

After others left the room, we sat at the table. He began by telling me that I had had one heck of a year but that I had conducted myself honorably and had a great reputation. He said I was repeatedly put in impossible positions. He said you saved her and then they hated you for what you did later, but what choice did you have? He said he thought very highly of me and looked forward to working with me, saying he hoped I planned to stay on. I assured him I intended to stay. He said good.

I then executed the session exactly as I had planned. I told him that I wanted to meet with him to tell him more about what is in the reports written by [redacted] (although I didn't use that name). I said that the written reports themselves were [redacted] and the content known at IC senior level and that I didn't want him caught cold by some of the detail. I then explained that the [redacted]

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I said, the Russians allegedly had tapes involving him and prostitutes at the Presidential Suite at the Ritz Carlton in Moscow from about 2013. He interjected, "there were no prostitutes; there were never prostitutes." He then said something about him being the kind of guy who didn't need to "go there" and laughed (which I understood to be communicating that he didn't need to pay for sex). He said "2013" to himself, as if trying to remember that period of time, but didn't add anything. He said he always assumed that hotel rooms he stayed in when he travels are wired in some way. I replied that I do as well.

I said I wasn't saying this was true, only that I wanted him to know both that it had been reported and that the reports were in many hands. I said media like CNN had them and were looking for a news hook. I said it was important that we not give them the excuse to write that the FBI has the material on [REDACTED] and that we were keeping it very close-hold. He said he couldn't believe they hadn't gone with it. I said it was inflammatory stuff that they would get killed for reporting straight up from the source reports.

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He then started talking about all the women who had falsely accused him of grabbing or touching them (with particular mention of a "stripper" who said he grabbed her) and gave me the sense that he was defending himself to me. I responded that we were not investigating him and the stuff might be totally made up but it was being said out of Russia and our job was to protect the President from efforts to coerce him. I said we try to understand what the Russians are doing and what they might do. I added that I also wanted him to know this in case it came out in the media.

He said he was grateful for the conversation, said more nice things about me and how he looks forward to working with me and we departed the room.

JBC

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Classification: ~~SECRET//ORCON/NOFORN~~

1/28/17

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I had dinner with President Trump in the Green Room at the White House last night at 6:30 pm. We sat facing each other at a small oval table set for two and placed in the center of the room. There were two servers (who I had the chance to chat with a bit because I arrived about 10 minutes early; they were both retired Navy submariners and we had a fun discussion about height clearance in submarines). The servers were only in the room when they delivered food or retrieved plates.

The conversation, which was pleasant at all times, was chaotic, with topics touched, left, then returned to later, making it very difficult to recount in a linear fashion. Normally I can recall the pieces of a conversation and the order of discussion with high confidence. Here, given the nature of it, there is a distinct possibility that, while I have the substance right, the order was slightly different. It really was conversation-as-jigsaw-puzzle in a way, with pieces picked up, then discarded, then returned to.

The President spoke an overwhelming majority of the time. He never asked me an open-ended question or left it to me to choose a topic of conversation. There were almost no periods of silence during the 1 hour and 20 minutes, except once or twice when the President paused as the servers entered. I felt comfortable throughout, although never relaxed, given the focus conversation required.

At various times, he talked about the inauguration and crowd size, the campaign and his effective use of free media ("earned media"), the extraordinary luxury of the White House (which he favorably compared to Mar-a-lago), his many activities during the day and week, his young son's height, the viciousness of the campaign (where I interjected about Adams and Jefferson; he said he had been given a book about it, which was upstairs), how he had not been mocking a handicapped reporter, had not assaulted any of the women who claimed he did (reviewing in detail several of the allegations), and many other things. I will attempt to recount in some detail only those parts that related in some way to my work.

He touched on my future at various points. The first time he asked "so what do you want to do," explaining that lots of people wanted my job ("about 20 people"), that he thought very highly of me and had heard great things, that the people of the FBI really like me, but he would understand if I wanted to walk away given all I had been through, although he thought that would be bad for me personally because it would look like I had done something wrong, that he of course can make a change at FBI if he wants, but he wants to know what I think. There was no acknowledgement by him (or me) that we had already talked about this twice.

I responded by saying that he could fire me any time he wished, but that I wanted to stay and do a job I love and think I am doing well. I explained that I never expected to be back in government but had found this job hugely rewarding and wanted to serve out my term. I added that I was "reliable" in one way but not in the way political people sometimes use the term. I explained that he could count on me to always tell him the truth. I said I don't do sneaky things, I don't leak, I don't do

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weasel moves. But I was not on anybody's side politically and could not be counted on in that traditional political sense, which I said I thought was in the president's best interest. He asked whether the FBI leaks and I answered that of course in an organization of 36,000 we were going to have some of that, but I said I think the FBI leaks far less than people often say. I predicted he, like all Presidents, would discover the entire government leaks like crazy and explained that it often comes from the first or second hop out from those actually working on the sensitive thing.

He replied that he needed loyalty and expected loyalty. I did not reply, or even nod or change my facial expression, which he noted because we came back to it later.

The conversation then swerved into a long discussion of the email investigation (which we returned to at least once more). This was where I spoke the most and laid out for him my thinking (with frequent interruption) in a manner similar to my discussions with Senators Feinstein and Grassley during our one-on-ones. The one detail I added was about the AG directing me not to use the word "investigation."

He knew the sequence of events extremely well, breaking them down in his lexicon into Comey One, Comey Two, and Comey Three developments and he walked through how he saw each played out during the campaign, in great detail. He asked whether it was true "there was a revolt" after Comey One. I said that was nonsense and I had worked hard to see if folks had concerns. I added that I surely didn't need to tell him that the media sometimes gets stuff wrong. I explained that the investigators all agreed there was no case; he said he disagreed and thought there was a case. He asked me at several points how I had held up under all the abuse. I explained the freedom that comes from doing the right thing in the right way, surrounded by people who are helping make the decisions in the same way.

At this point he asked me (and asked again later) whether "your guy McCabe" has a problem with me, explaining that "I was pretty rough on him and his wife during the campaign." I explained that Andy was a true professional and had no problem at all. I then explained what FBI people were like, that whatever their personal views, they strip them when they step into their bureau roles and actually hold "political people" in slight contempt, without regard to party.

At about this point, he asked me to compare AG Holder and AG Lynch. I said I thought AG Holder was smarter and more sophisticated and smoother than AG Lynch, who I added is a good person. He said Holder and President Obama were quite close. I replied that they were and it illustrated, in my view, a mistake Presidents make over and over again: Because they reason that problems for a President often come from Justice, they try to bring Justice close, which paradoxically makes things worse because an independent DOJ and FBI are better for a President and the country. I listed off John Mitchell, Ed Meese, an Al Gonzales as examples of this mistake and he added Bobby Kennedy.

At about this point, he turned to what he called the "golden showers thing" and recounted much of what he had said previously on that topic. He repeated that it was a complete fabrication and "fake news." I explained again why I had thought it important that he know about it. I also explained that one of the reasons we told him was that the media, CNN in particular, was telling us they were about to run with it. He said it bothered him if his wife thought there was even a one percent chance it was true in any respect. He said he had spoken to people who had been on the Miss Universe trip with him and they had reminded him that he didn't stay over night in Russia for that. He said he arrived in the morning, did events, then showered and dressed for the pageant at the hotel (he didn't say the hotel name) and left for the pageant. Afterwards, he returned only to get his things because they departed for New York by plane that same night. He said he thought maybe he should ask me to investigate the whole thing to prove it was a lie. I did not ask any questions. I replied that it was up to him, but I wouldn't want to create a narrative that we were investigating him, because we are not and I worried such a thing would be misconstrued. I also said that it is very difficult to disprove a lie. He said "maybe you're right," but several times asked me to think about it and said he would also think about it.

We returned to the topic of my job and in response to his question I explained how I had ended up with the position and that I had been pleasantly surprised that President Obama thought of the role the way I did: He wanted competence and independence and didn't want the FBI involved in policy. He wanted to be able to sleep at night knowing the FBI was well run.

The President then spoke again about being glad I wanted to stay. He said Mattis said great things about me, as did Sessions. He explained he had asked a lot of people about me and heard great things. He then returned to loyalty, saying "I need loyalty." I replied that he would always get honesty from me. He paused and said that's what he wants, "honest loyalty." I replied "you will get that from me." (It is possible we understood that phrase differently, but I chose to understand it as consistent with what I had said throughout the conversation: I will serve the President with loyalty to the office, the country, and the truth. I decided it would not be productive to push the subject further.)

At about this point he asked again about "your guy McCabe" and whether he was "going to be okay." I again affirmed Andy's ability and professionalism and said the President would come to see and benefit from both.

He then asked who I thought I should "deal with" and he suggested Reince Priebus. I explained that in the prior administration my WH contacts were with the COS, or the people in Mike Flynn's job and Tom Bossert's job. He said "Reince doesn't know we are having dinner," but he will tell him and that I should deal with Reince. He then went on to explain that he has serious reservations about Mike Flynn's judgment and illustrated with a story from that day in which the President apparently discovered during his toast to Teresa May that [REDACTED] had called four days

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ago. Apparently, as the President was toasting PM May, he was explaining that she had been the first to call him after his inauguration and Flynn interrupted to say that [redacted] had called (first, apparently). It was then that the President learned of [redacted] call and he confronted Flynn about it (not clear whether that was in the moment or after the lunch with PM May). Flynn said the return call was scheduled for Saturday, which prompted a heated reply from the President that six days was not an appropriate period of time to return a call from the [redacted] of a country like [redacted] ("This isn't [redacted] we are talking about."). He said that if he called [redacted] and didn't get a return call for six days he would be very upset. In telling the story, the President pointed his fingers at his head and said "the guy has serious judgment issues." I did not comment at any point during this topic and there was no mention or acknowledgment of any FBI interest in or contact with General Flynn.

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As we got up, he said we should have my family back for dinner. When I didn't reply, he added, "or a tour, whatever you think is appropriate." As we stepped from the Green Room, he said "Reince knows we are having dinner" (the opposite of what he said earlier) "deal with him; I will tell him." He then walked me into the East Room. I said I had been there before when President Obama held a big dinner for senior staff and appointees around Christmas. We then shook hands and parted.

JBC

JBC 1/28/17

~~SECRET~~
I went to the White House today for a 4 pm "meet and greet" with COS Reince Priebus. As I walked in from West Exec, I saw and briefly chatted with Bill Priestap and Jen Boone, who were there to do a defensive briefing [redacted]

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As I waited in the West Wing lobby, Mike Flynn stopped by and sat down. We chatted for about five minutes about his new job, the challenges in building a staff, and working with folks who had never been in government before, how he maintains fitness, etc. There was no mention by either of us of [redacted]
[redacted]

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COS Priebus's assistant came and got me and took me to his office. He greeted me and we sat with his desk between us. He explained that this was a chance to get acquainted, and he guided the conversation in a variety of directions.

Early in our conversation he brought of the immigration order and asked if I was a lawyer. He asked if I agreed that the order appear facially valid. I said I did, as I believed OLC had; the President has broad authority in the area. I added that because immigration was not an FBI issue, I had not followed the court discussion carefully and did not know what considerations there might be beyond the face of the order.

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We touched on a variety of subjects, including "how the [redacted] ended up in the report." I explained that the analysts from all three agencies agreed it was relevant and that portions of the material were corroborated by other intelligence. They discussed whether [redacted] and decided it made most sense to [redacted] I said I agreed with that decision and thought it very important that it be included and briefed to a select audience. He pressed again and said that the material was [redacted] I explained that the primary source [redacted] much of it was consistent with and corroborative of other intelligence, and that the incoming president needed to know the rest of it was out there.

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I explained to him that at our dinner the President had expressed interest in having me investigate the Golden Showers thing. I repeated what I had told the President about not wanting to create a narrative that we were investigating him.

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He then asked about leaks of the fact of [redacted] and that it was briefed to the incoming president. I said I didn't know where it came from but I suspect it came from folks who have left government. He asked whether it could have come from the FBI. I said it was possible but extremely unlikely in view. We talked about leaks in general and I explained my view that they almost always come from one or two hops out and that every president is plagued by them. He asked if we had ever caught an FBI leaker. I said we had, but it was a rare thing because it almost always turned on our willingness to go after reporter records. He then recalled the Obama administration conflict with James Rosen of Fox. He also mentioned the leak of the read-outs of the Presidents calls with foreign leaders.

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He then asked me if this was a "private conversation." I replied that it was. He then said he wanted to ask me a question and I could decide whether it was appropriate to answer. He then asked, "Do you have a FISA order on Mike Flynn?" I paused for a few seconds and then said that I would answer here, but that this illustrated the kind of question that had to be asked and answered through established channels. I said the answer [REDACTED] I then explained that the normal channel was from DOJ leadership to the WH counsel about such things. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I would normally make sure the AG and DAG were aware and they would likely inform the WH Counsel and he could decide whether to inform the COS. I explained that it was important that communications about any particular case go through that channel to protect us and to protect the WH from any accusations of improper influence.

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He said he understood and then asked me what I would talk to Denis McDonough about. I said two kinds of things: policy, like Going Dark, and particular operational issues if we were facing a terror threat or there was an intelligence operation that was sensitive. He would call me to cut through the clutter and find out directly what he needed to know. Reince responded that that was helpful and he hoped I would call him to offer thoughts whenever I thought they would benefit from them, whether not it related to the FBI. He said they would welcome the feedback. I said I would.

He said he understood my dinner with the President had gone very well and that he was interested in my staying on. I repeated what I had told the President, including that we had agreed not to announce anything. Reince asked me how it worked and I explained that I had a ten-year term and, although the President could fire me anytime he liked, I would just continue my term. There was nothing to announce.

During the conversation, Reince also touched the email investigation, offering his view that the Clinton team had misplayed my final announcement and should have pushed it harder as good news. He also said, reflectively, that it wasn't the Russians' fault that she failed to campaign in Michigan, and it wasn't my fault that she set up her email the way she did. He then pressed me on why it wasn't chargeable "gross negligence," and I took him through the facts and the law. At some point I added that it also wasn't my fault that Huma Abedin forwarded emails to Anthony Weiner.

Reince then took me to the Oval Office to greet the President on my way out. The President was seated behind his desk, speaking to Sean Spicer. He introduced me to Mr. Spicer, who shook my hand and departed. Reince stayed, seated to my right as I sat in a chair facing the President.

The President then spoke about a variety of topics, touching on the email investigation (wondering aloud what it would have been like to run against Bernie

Sanders if I had recommended charging Hillary Clinton). He asked (as he had at our dinner) whether my deputy had a problem with him, and recounting how hard he had been on the campaign trail, saying "the number 2 guy at the FBI took a million dollars from the Clintons." I again explained that Andy McCabe was a pro. He asked whether he had ever mentioned to me the campaign attacks. I said "never," and again explained he was a true pro and you would come to value him. I said if he had it to do over again I'm sure he would urge his wife not to run, but that the guy put everything aside and did his job well.

The President talked about the leak of the "read-outs" from his calls with Australia and Mexico, explaining that the leaks couldn't have come from the "other side," and he understood we were helping look into that. Reince interjected that "Kellogg" was looking at it and we were helping. I said I would follow up to find out what was going on.


~~11/18/17~~
The President brought up the "Golden Showers thing" and said it really bothered him if his wife had any doubt about it. He then explained, as he did at our dinner, that he hadn't stayed overnight in Russia during the Miss Universe trip. Twice during this part of the conversation, Reince tried to interject a comment about the [REDACTED] and "why it was even in there," but the President ignored him. The President said "the hookers thing" is nonsense but that Putin had told him "we have some of the most beautiful hookers in the world." (He did not say when Putin had told him this and I don't recall [REDACTED])

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~~11/18/17~~
He then pivoted to the Russians wanting an apology from Bill O'Reilly. I said I had seen that and O'Reilly's reply, which was to "call him in 2023." The President then said that O'Reilly's question about whether he respected Putin had been a hard one. [REDACTED] He said he does respect the leader of a major country and thought that was the best answer. He then said, "You think my answer was good, right?" I said the answer was fine, except the part about killers, because we aren't the kind of killers that Putin is. When I said this, the President paused noticeably. I don't know what to make of it, but he clearly noticed I had directly criticized him.

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The conversation then moved to other pleasantries and we wrapped up with a handshake.


BC 2/8/2017

(1)

I attended an Oval office homeland threat briefing for the President today. The meeting was scheduled for 4 pm but was delayed by a prior meeting, which was apparently related to the ongoing litigation over the immigration executive order. The AG and Sec DHS were in the earlier meeting and remained in the Oval when my meeting began, at about 4:15.

There were about a dozen people in the Oval for the homeland session. I sat facing the President over the Resolute Desk in a semi-circle of 6 chairs. DD/CIA sat to my left and D/NCTC to my right. Staff members occupied the couches and chairs behind me. Tom Bossert perched on the arm of a couch to steer the session. I noticed Jared Kushner and Stephen Bannon by face. Mike Dempsey and the VP's NSA were also there, and two or three others (I think including Reince Priebus).

At the completion of the session, the President thanked everyone and said he wanted to speak with me alone. The AG lingered momentarily by my chair, but the President thanked him and said he wanted to meet with Jim. He repeated this at least one more time to usher people out. Everyone left except Jared Kushner, who stopped by my chair to shake hands and exchange pleasantries, including a few brief words about the challenges of the email investigation. The President joined in this brief exchange but then told Mr. Kushner that he wanted to meet with me. That left the two of us alone.

He began by saying he wanted to "talk about Mike Flynn." He then said that, although Flynn "hadn't done anything wrong" in his call with the Russians (a point he made at least two more times in the conversation), he had to let him go because he misled the Vice President, whom he described as "a good guy." He explained that he just couldn't have Flynn misleading the Vice President and, in any event, he had other concerns about Flynn, and had a great guy coming in, so he had to let Flynn go.

He asked me if I had seen Sean Spicer's press briefing today and I replied that I hadn't. He said he had done a great job of explaining why they did what they did. He then asked if "you saw my Tweet this morning," and quickly added that "it is really about the leaks." He then reviewed in some detail the leaks of his calls with the leaders of Mexico and Australia, including how the calls had gone, how he assumed that calls he made on "this beautiful phone [touching the gray phone on the desk]" were confidential, how it couldn't have come from the Mexicans or Australians, how the transcripts actually include things he doesn't remember saying ("and they say I have one of the world's greatest memories"), and that it makes us look terrible to have these things leaking. He then referred at length to the leaks relating to Mike Flynn's call with the Russians, which he stressed was not wrong in any way ("he made lots of calls"), but that the leaks were terrible.

I tried to interject several times to agree with him about the leaks being terrible, but was unsuccessful. When he finished, I said I agreed very much that it was terrible that his calls with foreign leaders leaked. I said they were classified and he needed to be able to speak to foreign leaders in confidence. [NOTE: because this is an

unclassified document, I will be limited in how I describe what I said next]. I then explained why leaks purporting to be about FBI intelligence operations were also terrible and a serious violation of the law. I explained that the FBI gathers intelligence in part to equip the President to make decisions, and if people run around telling the press what we do, that ability will be compromised. I said I was eager to find leakers and would like to nail one to the door as a message. I said something about it being difficult and he replied that we need to go after the reporters, and referred to the fact that 10 or 15 years ago we put them in jail to find out what they know, and it worked. He mentioned Judy Miller by name. I explained that I was a fan of pursuing leaks aggressively but that going after reporters was tricky, for legal reasons and because DOJ tends to approach it conservatively. He replied by telling me to talk to "Sessions" and see what we can do about being more aggressive. I told him I would speak to the Attorney General.


At about this point, Reince Priebus opened the wall door by the clock and the President sent him away, saying he would be another minute or two and he knew people were waiting.

He then returned to the topic of Mike Flynn, saying that Flynn is a good guy, and has been through a lot. He misled the Vice President but he didn't do anything wrong in the call. He said, "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go. He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go." I replied by saying, "I agree he is a good guy," but said no more.

The President then wrapped up our conversation by returning to the issue of finding leakers. I said something about the value of putting a head on a pike as a message. He replied by saying it may involve putting reporters in jail. "They spend a couple days in jail, make a new friend, and they are ready to talk." I laughed as I walked to the door Reince Priebus had opened.

As I walked out the Vice President was standing just outside the door, waiting. We shook hands. There was a large group with him, including Priebus and the newly sworn-in Secretary of HHS, Tom Price. I walked through the group and away from the Oval office, went downstairs, and exited onto the West Executive Drive. On the way out downstairs, I saw John Kelly gathered with staff. I stopped to greet him and he told me he has previously accepted an invitation to speak to HRT at Quantico about leadership and wondered if it was still okay to do it. I said by all means; that would be great.

JBC
2/14/17

 2/14/17

Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI)

From: James B. Comey
Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2017 12:06 PM
To: Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: Call from POTUS

Categories: D Followup

Just called to check in and see how I'm doing. I said I'm doing great, have a lot going on. I added that Jeff Sessions has hit the ground running with a great speech on violent crime. He talked about Sessions a bit, then last night's speech. Said he heard I'm doing great. Hopes I take good care of myself and come by to say hello when I'm at WH. That's it.

3/30/17

The President called me on my CMS phone at 8:13 am today (March 30, 2017). The call lasted 11 minutes (about 10 minutes when he was connected). We were connected by Royal Crown switchboard.

He began by joking that I was getting more publicity than he. I replied that I hate it. He then said he was trying to run the country and the cloud of this Russia business was making that difficult. He said he thinks he would have won the health care vote but for the cloud. He then went on at great length, explaining that he has nothing to do with Russia (has a letter from the largest law firm in DC saying he has gotten no income from Russia), was not involved with hookers in Russia (can you imagine me, hookers? I have a beautiful wife, and it has been very painful), is bringing a personal lawsuit against Christopher Steele, always advised people to assume they were being recorded in Russia, has accounts now from those who travelled with him to Miss Universe pageant that he didn't do anything, etc.

He asked what he could do to lift the cloud. I explained that we were running it down as quickly as possible and that there would be great benefit, if we didn't find anything, to our Good Housekeeping seal of approval, but we had to do our work. He agreed, but then returned to the problems this was causing him, went on at great length about how bad he was for Russia because of his commitment to more oil and more nukes (ours are 40 years old).

He said something about the hearing last week. I responded by telling him I wasn't there as a volunteer and he asked who was driving that, was it Nunes who wanted it? I said all the leadership wanted to know what was going on and mentioned that Grassley had even held up the DAG nominee to demand information. I said we had briefed the leadership on exactly what we were doing and who we were investigating.

I reminded him that I had told him we weren't investigating him and that I had told the Congressional leadership the same thing. He said it would be great if that could get out and several times asked me to find a way to get that out.

He talked about the guy he read about in the Washington Post today (NOTE: I think he meant Sergei Millian) and said he didn't know him at all. He said that if there was "some satellite" (NOTE: I took this to mean some associate of his or his campaign) that did something, it would be good to find that out, but that he hadn't done anything and hoped I would find a way to get out that we weren't investigating him.

As the conversation ended, he said that he hadn't brought up the McCabe thing because I had said he was an honorable guy (NOTE: I think he meant that he "hadn't brought it up" in this conversation, but he could have meant something else). I repeated that he was. He then said he hadn't brought it up but that McAuliffe is close to the


Clintons and had given him money but I had said he was an honorable guy. I repeated that he (Andy) was an honorable person.

He finished by stressing that he was trying to make deals for the country, the cloud was hurting him (and mentioned going to G-7 with it hanging over him), and he hoped I could find a way to get out that he wasn't being investigated.

I told him I would see what we could do and that we would do the work well and as quickly as we could.

10:05: I called the Acting Attorney General and relayed the substance of the above and said I was telling him so he could decide what guidance to give me, if any.

JBC

 3/30/17

I returned the president's call this morning at 8:26 am EDT. We spoke for about four minutes. He said he was following up to see if I did what he had asked last time -- getting out that he personally is not under investigation. I replied that I had passed the request to the Acting AG and had not heard back from him. He spoke for a bit about why it was so important: He is trying to do work for the country, visit with foreign leaders, and any cloud, even a little cloud gets in the way of that. They keep bringing up the Russia thing as an excuse for losing the election. I explained that Dana Boente was now the acting AG on this after Jeff Sessions recused himself. He said maybe he would have his people reach out to Dana. I said that that was the way to handle it -- he should have the White House Counsel call the Acting Attorney General and make the request. He said that was what he would do. He then added, "Because I have been very loyal to you, very loyal, we had that thing, you know."² I did not reply, or ask him what he meant by "that thing."³ Instead I said again that the way to handle it was to have the White House Counsel call Dana Boente. He said that's what he would do.

He then switched topics and began to talk about Egypt and its leader, saying Obama didn't like the guy [redacted]. He mentioned the Coptic church bombings and how horrible they were. He said that three Americans had been killed by an Egyptian soldier and the Egyptian leader had raised it with him. I interrupted to say that I thought he meant [redacted] and an incident in Jordan. He agreed and said [redacted] had told him he wanted to bring the soldier to justice quickly, but that the FBI was in some way asking them to delay. He said [redacted]. I replied that I would dig into it but that I did not believe it to be true that the FBI was delaying a Jordanian prosecution. In fact, we were working very closely with the American families and had told them that we wanted the Jordanians to bring justice and if they did not we would try to bring the killer to the United States. He asked me to follow up and make sure that we were working well with the Jordanians and helping them quickly bring the killer to justice. I told him I would. He then said that I was doing a great job and wished me well. The call ended.

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gse 4/7/17

¹ I don't know the President well enough to give a high-confidence read here from a phone call, but I perceived him to be slightly annoyed by my reply.

² His use of these words did not fit with the flow of the call, which at that point had moved away from any request of me, but I have recorded it here as it happened.

³ I assumed when he said this that he was reaching back in his memory to our conversation about loyalty at our private dinner, which was sufficiently awkward to make it difficult for him to say I had promised to be loyal, which is where I thought he was headed in the comment.