

Twitter Thread by Seth Abramson



Seth Abramson

@SethAbramson



(THREAD) The Whitaker scandal is deepening, as it becomes clear that Sessions' Russia recusal was a coordinated sham and his firing an act of obstruction—and that his replacement is a White House plant inside the Mueller probe. I hope you'll retweet and read on for more details.



1/ From 2014-17 Whitaker worked for World Patent Marketing—which during his tenure defrauded consumers out of \$26 million and was successfully prosecuted by the feds. His involvement in the scam confirmed he had loose morals and that the feds would never want to employ him again.

2/ Despite the seeming impossibility of a man with Whitaker's background getting a job at Justice ever again—he'd been found to have used his former title as a US attorney to fraudulently threaten consumers with valid complaints with criminal penalties—Whitaker found an opening.

3/ Within 60 days of parachuting out of World Patent Marketing as it was being fined \$26 million by the feds, Whitaker was working for CNN and telling a fellow attorney panelist that his purpose in working for CNN was to get noticed by one man—Donald Trump—and thereby get a job.

4/ Whitaker spent his time at CNN making ludicrous statements about the Mueller probe: there was no obstruction or collusion, he said; Mueller had no authority to look into any aspect of Trump's finances or to subpoena him, he said. All the while, he hoped Trump was watching him.

5/ Trump was indeed watching. And Whitaker helped him solve a problem: AG Jeff Sessions' Russia recusal. With Sessions recused, Trump wasn't able to get any intel about what was happening inside the probe, and he desperately wanted that intel. Rosenstein wouldn't give it to him.

6/ So Matt Whitaker—who had no business **ever** being hired by the feds again; who'd proven himself willing to **violate the law**; who'd taken firm positions on the Mueller probe **expressly** to please Trump as he watched Whitaker on TV—was quickly made Sessions' new Chief of Staff.

7/ What happened next was just what you'd expect: Whitaker began reporting privately to the White House—going there at least 12 times to meet Trump, per media reports—and during those trips discussing Mueller's probe. It's unthinkable that Sessions didn't know this was happening.

8/ Remember, Sessions has criminal liability in the Russia case—he met secretly with the Russians to negotiate sanctions and discuss the presidential campaign and perjured himself multiple times to Congress. Though recused, he has a vested interest in Trump getting off scot-free.

9/ While meetings between AG Sessions—who was receiving briefings from the head of the Mueller probe, Rod Rosenstein—and Trump would have drawn a lot of attention, Whitaker could meet with the president without nearly as much attention being brought to their clandestine liaisons.

10/ I use the phrase "clandestine liaisons" advisedly—not for the sake of empty drama. Trump's Chief of Staff, John Kelly, privately called Whitaker Trump's "eyes and ears" at Justice, and media reports confirm he was **specifically** prone to discuss the Mueller probe with Trump.

11/ Any secret Whitaker-Trump discussion of Mueller probe was inappropriate—Trump knew it, Sessions knew it, Kelly knew it, and Whitaker knew it. But Whitaker had been selected **because** his history showed he was willing to break rules—and he was perpetually thankful for his job.

12/ Whitaker had therefore been far more helpful to Trump than the recused Sessions, and far more helpful than Rod Rosenstein—who'd refused to pass the intel to Trump about the Mueller probe that Trump wanted. So as ballots were still being counted from the midterm elections...

13/ ...Trump fired AG Sessions, refused to elevate Deputy AG Rosenstein to Sessions' position—as the statutory DOJ order of succession required—and installed his spy Whitaker as AG. He then **lied to America** about whether he'd ever met with Whitaker, saying he "didn't know him."

14/ Meanwhile, over at DOJ, Whitaker was telling friends that he'd **never** recuse himself from overseeing the Mueller probe. This despite his public statements on the probe, which included a detailed plan for a (then-hypothetical) AG decimating the probe by starving it of funds.

15/ Moreover, because Sessions' firing—obscured by Trump forcing Sessions to write a "letter of resignation," then confirmed by Kelly ordering Sessions out of DOJ 3 days before Sessions wanted—was obstruction, and will likely be looked into by Mueller, Whitaker's now a *witness*.

16/ The upshot: legal scholars say Trump's installment of Whitaker as AG violated both the Constitution and statute; Trump has lied repeatedly about his relationship with Whitaker; Republicans refuse to put Whitaker under oath about his intentions; Whitaker is a Mueller witness.

17/ Whitaker's statements on Mueller and his probe, coupled with him being a Mueller witness in a future obstruction case over Sessions' firing—added to the fact that Whitaker was campaign manager for Trump's 2016 National Co-Chair Sam Clovis—render him *historically* conflicted.

18/ On these facts, any investigator's theory of the case would be that Sessions, himself implicated in the Russia probe, allowed his Chief of Staff to be used by Trump as a recusal end-around—a spy—at Justice, and that Whitaker was then rewarded with an illegal elevation to AG.

19/ The Whitaker-Trump plot to destroy Mueller's probe is clear: have AG Whitaker block indictments—he can—foreclose new avenues of investigation, and starve Mueller of funds. And why did Trump move so fast to install him? Because reports say *Trump Jr. is about to be indicted*.

20/ The Whitaker Scandal is as big as Watergate, even as it arises within a Trump-Russia plot 10 times larger/more criminal than Nixon's. And America must wait *2 months* to see Congress do anything about it. The damage Trump and Whitaker can do in that time is incalculable. /end

PS/ Urgent action *is* being taken: Coons (Senate)/Nadler (House) are moving to pass a bill protecting Mueller ASAP; the new House plans to call Whitaker to testify; 1000 protests happened nationwide yesterday; 18 state AGs published a protest letter. But 2 months is a long time.

NOTE/ None of the actions now being taken directly addresses the danger of Whitaker using his power to destroy Mueller's probe without firing him. What's needed is a federal injunction—sought by Mueller or the new House—against Whitaker's installation as AG or his upcoming moves.

UPDATE/ We now know 2 things: 1) Trump discussed events at DOJ with Whitaker—including Russia—12 times; 2) in October Trump discussed with Whitaker (h/t to DM for link) whether he wanted to be the new AG. How much do you want to bet these events coincided? <https://t.co/5hmABFQ5G1>

UPDATE2/ If you're Mueller—and you're investigating Sessions' firing as Obstruction—the first witness you want to speak to* is Matt Whitaker, to find out what he discussed with (or promised to) Trump about the Russia probe before replacing the AG. Whitaker *must* recuse himself.