

*Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.*

***The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.***

*Section 3 – The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.*

*Immediately after they shall be assembled*

**MeetToImpeach.com**

## **FEATURE:**

# **Impeachment: week in review**

A weekly one paragraph summary report and analysis, followed by recaps (with links) of representative on-line articles and essays – typically 800 to 1,600 words.

**Week ending 2/18/2018 (~1,700 words)**

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**Minneapolis 2/19/18 Edition** – The last week saw two major impeachment developments. First, and most prominently reported, Special Counsel Robert Mueller has indicted 13 Russian nationals and three entities for direct interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, and more specifically based on an overall pattern that favored Donald Trump, opposed Hillary Clinton, promoted lower turnout among minorities, and promoted third party votes from people leaning towards Hillary. For three crucial states – Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin -- that provided Trump’s Electoral Vote margin of victory, Trump won by less than one percent in each state, and Green Party candidate Jill Stein received more than Trump’s margin of victory. One of the indicted Russians is a close associate of President Putin, and regarded as a person Putin can turn to for actions that are ethically and legally dubious. President Trump proclaimed himself vindicated because there is no direct accusation of cooperation by those who were indicted, and continued his attack on the FBI; his surrogate, FL Governor Rick Scott – called on FBI Director Christopher Wray to resign over the bureau’s failure to stop a Florida school shooter after the bureau had received a disturbing report about the shooter.

The second major development is a now-metastasized story line featuring marital infidelity or other sexual improprieties by President Trump, combined with apparently coordinated efforts by Trump, lawyers, and possibly others – as described to CBS by reporter Ronan Farrow, a: “...commonality of powerful men using elaborate systems to silence women

and stories those women might tell about them. Because of the pattern Farrow has identified, and the nine-month timeline of the affair alleged by 1998 Playmate of the Year Karen McDougal, and because the pattern Farrow identifies fits into the larger #MeToo movement narrative, this story is likely to remain in the news for a long time.

## **The Mueller Investigation**

[Vox offers](#) an initial assessment of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's indictments of thirteen Russian nationals for directly interfering in the U.S. election, acting to favor President Trump over Hillary Clinton. While President Trump claimed vindication based on the fact that the indictments didn't claim the Russian's involved the Trump campaign knowingly in their actions, the extent of the Russian intervention detailed in the indictments was substantial, and was not reported on by major U.S. media in the run-up to the election. On the one hand, the indictments are significant partly because they are so narrowly centered on the question of actual Russian interference -- central to the Mueller Investigation's original mandate. On the other hand, none of the indictments are likely to lead to a trial of any kind for those indicted, since Russia is unlikely to assent to U.S. extradition of the individuals indicted.

According to the [NY Times](#): " Mr. Trump's supporters must continue to contend with questions about whether his upset for the ages was the result of foul play." According to the Mueller indictment, 126 million Americans were exposed to Russian-sponsored Facebook posts. The Russian intervention focused partly on discouraging potential Clinton voters from voting, and partly on encouraging them to vote third party. Trump's victory hinged on less than 80,000 votes in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania; those three states provided the needed margin of Electoral votes, and Green Party candidate Jill Stein received more than Trump's margin of victory in all three states. Florida also went to Trump by 1.2 percent. Amid multiple factors in a close election, the Times quotes Jennifer Palmieri, Clinton's campaign communications director: "Russia succeeded in weakening her enough so that the Comey letter could knock her off." The Times reports: "the nation's intelligence agencies say they do not have any way to calculate whether the Russian effort swung the election."

The [NY Times](#) introduces readers to Yevgeny Prigozhin -- "Putin's Cook" -- a mockish but accurate moniker for the central figure in Mueller's recent indictments of Russian nationals for interfering in the 2016 U.S. president election. Over the years Prigozhin has become a close

associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and well-connected insider oligarch in Russia's elite pantheon, partly based on catering contracts for major Kremlin events. His background includes both an entrepreneurial flair, and nine years in prison for robbery and other crimes. Based on links to assets, he is thought by some to be one of the five richest men in Russia. Vox reports: "Lately, he has branched out into areas like recruiting contract soldiers to fight overseas and establishing a popular online news service that pushes a nationalist viewpoint, making him even more indispensable to Mr. Putin." He is believed to be able to direct money from government contracts to activities that are both approved by the government elite, but with a layer of "deniability" allowing the government to disassociate itself. The fact that such a close associate of President Putin has been indicted by the United States in connection with interference with the 2016 U.S. Presidential election is bound to emerge as an extraordinarily difficult situation for President Trump.

[The Hill reports](#) President Trump responded to the Mueller indictments of 13 Russians with this tweet: "If it was the GOAL of Russia to create discord, disruption and chaos within the U.S. then, with all of the Committee Hearings, Investigations and Party hatred, they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. They are laughing their asses off in Moscow. Get smart America!"

[Mother Jones provides a link](#) to RBC, a Russian business newspaper, that gives the reader you an option to translate the Russian article into English. [Mother Jones was right on top of this story](#), publishing only one day after the extensive Russian article, which is well worth reading; it essentially corroborates the recent Mueller indictments of 13 Russian citizens.

The [Washington Post offers](#) a timeline of events and statements that contradict President Trump's claim that he never said Russia did not meddle in the election.

### **Past Trump affairs and coverups**

Claims of both a pattern of affairs conducted by President Donald Trump after his third and current marriage, and apparently coordinated efforts to suppress reporting on them, appear to have metastasized in a [New Yorker article](#) by Ronan Farrow. The article both recounts a nine-month affair with Karen McDougal, Playboy Magazine's 1998 Playmate of the year, and presents an argument that there a powerful and systematic process at work to silence women. A further

and essential element is that Farrow obtained eight pages of McDougal's handwritten notes on the affair, and has been able to reconstruct a detailed timeline running over about nine months, with many events and witnesses identified, and travel to many locations involved; McDougal alleges she was reimbursed by Trump for her travel expenses. It will be possible to investigate this account, which may yield significant corroborating information – and will keep the story in the news. [CBS News quotes Farrow](#) as saying of McDougal: "She acknowledges that this is a different kind of case but it has the commonality of powerful men using elaborate systems to silence women and stories those women might tell about them... she hoped her speaking about this system that ensnared her might encourage other women to step forward." Farrow's focus on this "elaborate system" -- together with the mass of detailed information over a most of year -- are the metastasizing elements to the story.

Farrow's New Yorker article is effectively expanded in a major [NY Times article](#) headlined "Tools of Trump's Fixer: Payouts, Intimidation and the Tabloids" -- focusing on alleged activities of Attorney Michael D. Cohen -- characterized as a long-time "fixer" for Trump. Particular attention is given to an apparent pattern of action by American Media, publisher of the National Enquirer -- owned by David J. Pecker. Pecker and American Media are alleged to have engaged in a pattern of first buying the exclusive rights to stories and/or photos, and then refusing to publish anything. The argument of ultimate harm to the public interest goes along this line: since agreements include provisions preventing the main source from speaking publicly about a matter, the result is to effectively suppress media reporting of news. This suppression of unfavorable news provides leverage over those being protected -- if there is not some kind of quid pro quo, the material could be published or otherwise made available at any time.

**FBI missed FL school shooter** -- [Bloomberg reports](#) President Trump tweeted Saturday the FBI is "spending too much time trying to prove Russian collusion with the Trump campaign -- there is no collusion. Get back to the basics and make us all proud!" Trump was also critical of a general failure to stop the shooting: "So many signs that the Florida shooter was mentally disturbed, even expelled from school for bad and erratic behavior. Neighbors and classmates knew he was a big problem. Must always report such instances to authorities, again and again!"

**Calls for Clinton Investigation** -- Robert Barnes, (a California attorney, not the

Washington Post reporter and editor), writing in [Law and Crime](#), a website produced by Dan Abrams, raises this question: given the new Mueller indictments of Russians, can both the Clinton Campaign, and Christopher Steele be indicted? Both Steele and the Russians are foreign citizens, both "tried to influence an election," and neither the Clinton Campaign, nor Steele, nor the DNC either reported Steele's receipts and expenditures to the FEC, or registered as a foreign agent. It is also alleged payments to Steele from the Clinton campaign and/or supporters, including the DNC, were "laundered" to make them appear to be legal expenses. More research is needed here -- however, there is a question as to whether doing "opposition research" per se is equivalent to "trying to influence an election" -- it's certainly something different than undertaking "false flag" social media operations, as the Russians are effectively accused of doing. While it seems clear the Clinton campaign and/or DNC tried to get Steele's claims publicized before the election, that effort failed.

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