



FEATURE:

Impeachment: week in review

A weekly one paragraph summary report and analysis, including MeetToImpeach news, followed by recaps (with links) of representative on-line articles and essays – typically 1,200 to 2,000 words.

Week ending 8/19/2018
 (~ 2,115 words)
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Minneapolis 8/19/18 Edition – BREAKING NEWS: Guilty and Guilty – there are three major ongoing impeachment stories this week – for the first two, this paragraph summarizes the breaking news only. **First**, Michael Cohen, President Trump’s former attorney and “fixer” reached a plea agreement with Federal prosecutors in New York – guilty pleas on eight counts, including two felony campaign finance violations. Cohen said his campaign violations were directed by “Candidate one” – that could only be then-candidate Donald Trump. Cohen also coordinated with one or more unnamed campaign officials – federal prosecutors will certainly follow up on that. We are now in a situation where President Trump is, in effect, an unindicted co-conspirator involved in felony campaign violations – however the Justice Department policy is currently to not indict a President in office. There was no cooperation agreement, and Cohen has no assurance that more charges will not be brought against him by the Muller investigation; there still could be a cooperation agreement before everything is all said and done. **Second**, Paul Manafort, Trump’s campaign chairman at the time of the 2016 Republican National Convention, was convicted on eight of eighteen counts, including five for tax evasion, a failure to file for a foreign bank account, a bank fraud charge, and a conspiracy charge. Because the Jury didn’t reach a unanimous verdict on the other ten counts, a mistrial was declared for them. Manafort currently faces a second trial in Washington D.C. -- and could also be retried on the mistrial

counts. **Third**, the NY Times reports White House Counsel Donald McGahn met with Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigators for 30 hours, and “has cooperated extensively in the special counsel investigation, sharing detailed accounts..., including some that investigators would not have learned of otherwise...” McGahn’s cooperation was seen by the White House as part of a “transparency” strategy based on the idea that President Trump didn’t do anything wrong, and disclosure would lead to quick end of the investigation. The White House is reported to be re-thinking this strategy. Meanwhile, President Trump appears determined to hit the events of today head-on – heading for a rally in West Virginia just hours after the Guilty plea and Convictions were announced, touting recent “coal-friendly” policies. UPDATE: Trump’s West Virginia rally speech omitted mention of Cohen and Manafort. Fact checkers will have a field day with his stream-of-consciousness outpouring of numbers, all stated in an authoritative voice. As usual, he wrapped up with “we will make America Great Again” – followed immediately by the Rolling Stones’ “You can’t always get what you want.” In other impeachment-related news, a group of former U.S. intelligence leaders from past administrations of both parties have joined in condemning President Trump’s recent decision to revoke former CIA Director John Brennan’s security clearance -- an action that appears to be retaliation for Brennan’s harsh criticism of Trump. There is a strong bi-partisan objection to the idea of linking security clearances with stated political opinions – whatever those opinions might be. Finally, a group of over 300 newspapers united in an editorial campaign to challenge President Trump’s claim that a free press is somehow the “enemy of the People.” Meanwhile, as we’ve another week closer to the midterm election, Steve Bannon and Tom Steyer apparently agree that the key is turnout – few people are undecided about Trump at this point – the major question is who shows up at the polls. After a major book rollout last week, there isn’t much indication that Omarosa’s new book, Unhinged, is selling well – it hasn’t yet shown up on the PublishersWeekly.com list of 25 best non-fiction hardcover books.

MeetToImpeach Event: The next MeetToImpeach event will be at “People’s Plaza” (AKA "Government Plaza", between Minneapolis City Hall and the Hennepin County Government Center, at 4th Street and 5th Avenue) from Noon to 1 PM on Saturday, August 25th. This will be a non-partisan, non-campaign event. It will be delayed or cancelled if there is rain.

Trump “fixer” Michael Cohen’s plea deal doesn’t include cooperation with Mueller–

[Note: see the lead paragraph for more current information] [ABC News reports](#) that former Trump attorney and "fixer" Michael Cohen reached a deal with Federal prosecutors in New York. [The NY Times reported](#) the deal does not include cooperation with federal authorities, but doesn't preclude cooperation with the Mueller investigation. [However, ABC reports](#): “The absence of a cooperation deal - while it would be notable - would not completely eliminate the possibility that Cohen could subsequently provide information to investigators that might result in a more lenient sentence.” [NBC reported](#): "Michael Cohen, President Trump's former personal attorney, is discussing a possible guilty plea with federal prosecutors in Manhattan in connection with tax fraud and banking-related matters, multiple sources familiar with the matter tell NBC News... The plea could have significant implications for Trump, who has blasted Cohen ever since his former fixer and his attorney, old Clinton hand Lanny Davis, began signaling this summer that Cohen might cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation." [CNN reports](#): “Michael Cohen is expected to plead guilty to multiple counts of campaign finance violations, tax fraud and bank fraud as part of the deal, according to three sources. ¶The deal would include jail time and a substantial monetary fine. ¶Among the sticking points in the talks, the two sides were negotiating over jail time, according to one source. Cohen is pressing for three years but prosecutors are seeking 50 months.” The bank fraud issue involves loans of \$20 million backed with New York City Taxi Medallions as collateral. There is no indication Cohen is behind on payments. While Federal fraud charges involving a performing bank loan are unusual, other legal issues could affect the context for a possible decision to indict Cohen.

Manafort Jury convicts on 8 of 18 counts – mistrial declared for the other 10

[Note: see the lead paragraph for more current information] Earlier, [The Independent \(UK\) had reported](#) a six man six woman jury has entered its fourth day of deliberations in Paul Manafort's Federal criminal trial: "The jury has been discussing whether to convict Mr. Manafort of up to 18 criminal charges related to bank and tax fraud and his alleged failure to disclose more than 30 overseas bank accounts. Mr. Manafort denies all the charges against him."

White House Counsel McGahn met for 30 hours with Mueller’s investigators

[The NY Times reports](#) White House counsel, Donald McGahn met with Special Counsel

Robert Mueller’s investigators for 30 hours, and “has cooperated extensively in the special counsel investigation, sharing detailed accounts..., including some that investigators would not have learned of otherwise...” McGhan and his attorney, William Burck, “could not understand why Mr. Trump was so willing to allow Mr. McGahn to speak freely to the special counsel and feared Mr. Trump was setting up Mr. McGahn to take the blame for any possible illegal acts of obstruction,” the NY Times said, and continued: “Mr. Burck said that Mr. McGahn had been obliged to cooperate with the special counsel. ‘President Trump, through counsel, declined to assert any privilege over Mr. McGahn’s testimony, so Mr. McGahn answered the special counsel team’s questions fulsomely and honestly,...’” [Vox reports](#) Trump is not happy with the [NY Times](#) article, citing “multiple increasingly angry tweets.” Not asserting privilege was seen as part of the White House’s earlier strategy to cooperate fully with Mr. Mueller, they thought since President Trump hadn’t done anything illegal, the investigation would soon be completed. Recently, the White House is reported to be reconsidering the wisdom of that approach. Mr. McGahn’s cooperation has been placed by some in the context of Nixon White House Counsel John Dean, who also saw himself as “being set up” – Dean both cooperated with Watergate investigators and testified before a special Senate Watergate Committee... he eventually went to prison for obstruction of justice. McGahn is also reported to believe that his client is the Presidency as an institution, as distinct from President Trump as a person. Both White House lawyer Emmet Flood and personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, two of President Trump’s current legal team, are taking a tougher view on privilege – Flood reportedly contested Mueller’s attempt to meet with Chief of Staff John Kelly.

Former U.S. intelligence leaders show bi-partisan unity on Security Clearances –

[The Washington Post reports](#): “On Aug. 15, President Trump revoked former CIA director John Brennan’s security clearance. Brennan led the CIA during most of President Barack Obama’s second term and had become a vocal Trump critic. ¶A bipartisan group of more than a dozen former intelligence directors, plus retired Adm. William H. McRaven, spoke out against the president’s move. On Aug. 17, they were joined by another 60 officials, and over 170 added their names on Aug. 20.” Brennan has been harshly critical of President Trump, saying that his joint news conference with Russia's President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki was "nothing short of Treasonous," and gave "aid and comfort to the enemy." Former U.S. intelligence officials have not had retention of their security clearance conditioned on political

views. Trump is now also threatening the security clearances of current Federal employees -- in this situation some of them may be unable to continue in their positions without such clearance.

300+ Newspapers agree: Trump is wrong to say the news media is “Enemy of the People”

[The Boston Globe reports](#): "More than 300 news publications across the United States have committed to a Boston Globe-coordinated effort to run editorials Thursday promoting the freedom of the press, in light of President Trump's frequent attacks on the media. ¶ Some of the most respected and widely circulated newspapers in the country have committed to taking a stand in their editorial pages, including The New York Times, The Dallas Morning News, The Denver Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Chicago Sun-Times. The list ranges from large metropolitan dailies to small weekly papers with circulations as low as 4,000." [FOX News reported this response](#): "President Trump on Thursday accused The Boston Globe of 'COLLUSION' with other newspapers, as hundreds of outlets launched coordinated editorials hitting back at his attacks on members of the press." [Merriam-Webster offers this](#): "Definition of collusion: secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose" Openly coordinated mass publication simply can't be collusion.

Get Out The Vote is the agreed-on Midterm election strategy – for both sides –

Steve Bannon and Tom Steyer agree on two things -- the upcoming mid-term election is all about impeaching President Trump, and it will be decided by turnout. [Roll Call reports](#): “Former White House chief political strategist Steve Bannon has a bleak message for Republicans looking to retain control of the House in the 2018 midterms: If you don’t stop the blue wave, your heads won’t be the only ones that roll — President Donald Trump’s will, too. ¶ Last week, Bannon announced the launch of his initiative, Citizens of the American Republic, to help the GOP keep its House majority by tying a Democratic victory in November to impeachment... ¶ ‘This is not about persuasion. It’s too late to persuade anybody,’ Bannon said. ‘We’re 90 days away from this election. This is all about turnout and what I call base-plus.’” [USA Today reports](#) on California hedge fund billionaire Tom Steyer’s similar take: “Tom Steyer announced Monday he's spending an additional \$10 million to organize the more than 5.5 million supporters of his "Need to Impeach" President Donald Trump campaign through a national get-out-the-vote effort leading up to the November midterm elections... ¶ ‘Together we are a huge difference-maker,’ Steyer told supporters gathered Monday in Lansing, Mich. ‘And if we all

convince one other person, particularly in our family, to show up and vote, that would be game over for the Trump gang in November...' ¶¶The \$10 million 'Need to Vote' campaign brings Steyer's investments in this election cycle to \$120 million...''

Book Beat -- [Fortune reports](#): "Omarosa Manigault Newman has hit all of the morning talk shows, released scandalous tapes, and made some serious accusations against the United States president she worked for over an 11-month period and has known for 15 years. But her book isn't exactly burning up the sales charts. ¶¶Unhinged: An Insider's Account of the Trump White House officially hit shelves [August 14th], but it's only fifth on Amazon's Best Seller list. It's in fourth place on Barnes & Noble's list." The book didn't place in the [publishersweekly.com](#) list for top 25 non-fiction hardcover.

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