



Episode 1,150: DEBATE: Is There Anything to “Russiagate”?

Guest: Ray McGovern and David Pakman

WOODS: All right, gentlemen, the way we're going to do this is we'll begin with David, and David, you can take anywhere from five to ten minutes, and we're going to go on the honor system here. I won't be running a clock, but if it goes on too long, I'll start making tapping noises and clearing my throat or whatever, but I think we can do this on the honor system. So David will start, then we'll hear from Ray, and then each of you will have a chance to respond, and then we'll proceed from there. So David, without any further ado, why don't you present your case?

PAKMAN: Sure. Thanks for having me, first of all. I think that there are a couple different things that I find sort of most interesting about what's going on right now that I find to be sort of encompassed primarily right now by Robert Mueller's investigation, but really that goes beyond that as well into sort of patterns involving Donald Trump and his associates, both during the campaign and during the current administration. So I think that there's sort of like a three-pronged approach to take here. And you know, to be super clear, I'm of course willing to have my mind changed on any of these things and I think that really figuring out — my ultimate goal is really just to figure out what did happen, what didn't happen, and most importantly, were any crimes committed.

So I think that to start with, the catalyst for what is now known as Robert Mueller's special investigation was the possibility that Donald Trump or people involved with his campaign or his administration "colluded with" Russia or individuals associated with the Russian government in ways that might have been illegal. Now, we don't yet know whether that did or didn't happen, and I don't pretend that we know. But what I sort of focus on at this point — because again there's an investigation going on, so by definition we don't know, or at least I hope we don't know everything that Robert Mueller knows.

There's a couple different things to think about. Number one is there's been a lot of focus on the law, not using the word "collusion," and we've seen the narrative shift from there was no collusion to collusion isn't actually a crime. And I think that that's sort of a semantic argument that's not really relevant here, so I think that if we want to talk about prong one, which is "collusion," we really need to think about, well, were things of value solicited implicitly or explicitly from foreign nationals, for example, in connection with elections. If there are things of value that have been solicited or that the Trump administration was interested in accepting, that may be a crime. And again, there's an investigation going on. We're going to have to wait.

And I think when we look at Donald Trump, Jr. being offered "dirt on Hillary" and responding, "If it's what you say, I love it, especially later in the summer," that is certainly openness to accept materials of value from foreign nationals. And initially, we were told that the lawyer in question, Natalia Veselnitskaya, had no connection to the Kremlin. We've since found out that actually dating back many years, she was working with the Kremlin, including on a defense of a fraud case against a Russian company and more recently admitting that she was actually reporting to a Russian government officials.

So there we basically have, effectively, colloquially Donald Trump, Jr. soliciting opposition research from a foreign national for which there is value. Opposition research is something that costs a lot of money. We know that because how much money Cambridge Analytica was paid for the work that they were doing. So that's an offer that was clearly from someone that would be a foreign national. Under the law, it was about Hillary Clinton, meaning it's about a U.S. election, so that would be, if we want to talk about "collusion," that's something I would look at pretty directly.

In addition, the other element I think is important is that there was at least the implied offer from Donald Trump, Jr. to help work on a repeal of the Magnitsky Act, which put sanctions on Russia. That would be a quid pro quo. And again, I'm not a lawyer. We don't know what Robert Mueller knows, but I've spoken to lawyers who say that that also escalates the potential criminality.

Just as one more sort of element, and there's lots of these for this possible coordination, we know that Trump campaign advisor George Papadopoulos did meet with a Russian agent who also said he has dirt on Hillary Clinton, later bragged about Russia getting damaging Clinton emails, lied to the FBI about contacts with Russia. So while we will not really know the full scope of so-called collusion, and I don't pretend to know, I think that there's more than enough circumstantial evidence that this should be an investigation. And that's what I support. I'm not making any claims about my knowledge of specific crimes that did or didn't happen. But what I am saying is that anyone who denies that the circumstantial evidence warrants this investigation I disagree with.

However, then there's sort of like two other prongs. There's the prong of whether there was any criminality in attempts made to end this investigation. And once again, this is an ongoing investigation that's going on. Were firings that took place possibly crossing the line into criminal? Were there conversations that took place that could be considered witness tampering? And I present these once again as questions, because, by definition, this is an ongoing investigation, and this is why I have a problem with the sort of absolutist denialists who say there definitively were no crimes, period, because we don't know that. All we have is the circumstantial information, which I would argue more than justifies the investigation going on. And I'm glad to sort of delve more into the obstruction side of the conversation.

And in the interest of sort of getting to the third prong here, there is no doubt that it's legally well within Robert Mueller's scope to explore any possible crimes that he or his investigators may have been committed as a result of the investigation into both potential "collusion" and obstruction. And I think that there's no doubt at this point that money laundering is a very, very high probability when you look at a number of different deals involving many, many different countries, including countries in the Middle East, including Russia and Russian individuals as well through condo purchases potentially with inflated values. And whether that is part of the Russia story or not sort of depends on where you draw the line. But

certainly there's no doubt that those concerns for the Mueller team have stemmed from their initial investigation.

And to sort of put a final point on it, and I'm obviously super curious to hear Ray's perspective on this, I think that a lot of what is going on is self-inflicted by Donald Trump in the sense that, if from day one, if the first time that anything about Russia is mentioned Donald Trump doesn't tweet about it, says simply, "I support the full investigation. I know I will be vindicated, and in the meantime, I'm going to work on my political agenda," I think anywhere from 70 to 90% of what's going on now never happens. And it's been self-inflicted wound after self-inflicted wound carried about by the president. So that's the sort of general overview of my position.

WOODS: All right, thank you very much, David. Ray, it's your turn to talk to us for a few minutes, so the floor is yours.

MCGOVERN: Well, I have to agree with David about self-inflicted wounds on the part of Donald Trump. I mean, you couldn't have a worse character to keep scorn on himself. He lies all the time. The question is: what happened with respect to Russian meddling, so to speak, in the 2016 election? And that's what we're dealing with here. We're not dealing with whether these guys are crooks. I mean, you have to be blind or deaf not to realize that we're dealing with a bunch of crooks. I mean, money laundering? That's the name of the game. What are they doing with Manafort? Well, they've got the book on Manafort. So they say: look, Manafort, we can put you away for 35 years. Don't you remember Trump telling you about collusion with Russia? If you could just remember that — think about it. If you could just remember that, we could probably get you off with a six-month suspended sentence. That's the way Mueller works. The record is very clear. When we talk about crooks, he's one of them, and so is Comey.

So let me just backtrack for a second and refer to the fact that I've been watching Russian leaders for over half a century. Actually, 55 years. It's almost exactly 55 years since I joined the CIA as an analyst of Soviet foreign policy. So I've watched Russian leaders look at the world in a very, very close way, and when I think about the 2016 election, here is Putin watching the campaign and he's got his advisors around him and he's saying, *My God, this Trump. Wow, what a character. He's unpredictable. He brags about being unpredictable. And he lashes out at the slightest slight, whether it's real or imagined. Oh, man, this is going to be really fun. This is just the guy I want to have with his fingers on the nuclear codes. Do all we can to help him, help him win.* Now, if that sounds ridiculous, it's because it is ridiculous. There is no suggestion in Russian statements or Russian TV shows — and I have people watching this very closely — to suggest that there was a preference for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton. That's pretty much the basic premise here.

Now, a subset here is that "everyone knew" Hillary Clinton would win. Now, Comey says that in his book. And Comey explains that he felt he could do the things he did, many of which were clearly illegal, clearly unconstitutional, because he was, as he put it, operating in an environment where Hillary was going to win. And so when Hillary wins, who's going to hold him to account for taking wild liberties with the law and the Constitution?

So now, just to put an end to this point, if Hillary is going to win, if *The New York Times* had it 83% that she was going to win on the morning of the election, you're Mr. Putin, right, and you're sitting back there, and you're saying, *My God, everybody thinks Hillary's going to win.*

But you know, I think just for fun, here's what I think I'll do. I'll mess in the DNC at the Democratic National Committee computers and see if I can find – she'll find it out and that won't be good. She'll be even worse toward me than even – But let's just for fun – Yeah, give me a break. There was no percentage in Putin messing around in the Democratic National Committee computers. So what do we have here? Do we have any evidence? Well, no, we don't. All we have is claims by corrupt people working for the Democratic National Committee.

And I have to say that when David talked about opposition research, well, he neglected to mention that Hillary Clinton and the DNC paid megabucks through a cutout to have an ex-UK spy do "opposition research" turning up scurrilous details that even Comey admitted was scurrilous about Trump cavorting with prostitutes in Moscow well before he ever became a candidate. You know, it really is not quite right to talk about opposition research without talking about both sides.

So what we have here is a situation where – I'll just mention one other thing that's not widely known. We Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, who include, by the way, two former technical directors from the National Security Agency, the NSA, we asked Obama formally in a memorandum before he left office: would you please make clear what evidence there is that, A) the Russians hacked into the DNC, and B) they gave it to WikiLeaks. Now, it turns out that what Obama said on the 18th of January just two days before he left office – he said, *You know, the "Russian hack"* – so to speak, in quotes for my purposes – *we don't know how it got to WikiLeaks*. These conclusive results, namely in that NSA, FBI, CIA memorandum, turned out to be "inconclusive." Obama's words.

The other thing I'll just point to is that in this spurious memorandum, which is an embarrassment to intelligence analysis – and I've been with this for more than 50 years. The one they gave to the president-elect on the 6th of January, there's a sort of a left-handed compliment to WikiLeaks. And what they say is: the reason the Russian hack was given to WikiLeaks is because of their reputation for not fooling around with information, for not shading it any way, but just putting it out as is. Whoa. So there's a reality here. Julian Assange has never, ever been successfully criticized for having molded or shaped or fixed what he puts out. It was all the real deal.

And the last thing I'll say is: what was the real deal? The real deal was the Democratic National Committee documents the emails that Julian Assange advertised that he had on the 12th of June, 2016, and which he released in a readily searchable manner on the 22nd of July just three days before the Democrat National Convention. And what did they say? Well, people need to know that what they said was that Hillary Clinton stole the election from Bernie Sanders. It's pure as can be. If you don't believe me, why did the top five officials of the Democratic National Committee quit on the spot? That was three days before the election. That's pretty embarrassing.

But what happened? Well, groundwork had already been laid to divert attention from what was in those emails to why did the Russians do it? Why did the Russians do it? Now, even Hillary Clinton's PR person, Jennifer Palmieri, admitted that that was a really hard sell, a really hard sell until we got back to Brooklyn. And what does Jennifer Palmieri say then? She says: *Then we got intelligence people and correspondents, journalists in touch with intelligence people, and they gave us the material about colluding with Russia. And then the Obama administration started confirming that. Then we were off and running.* And so I heard

this personally from Jennifer Palmieri right after the election. So the whole thing was prepared.

What the situation here is and what I'd like to drive home is that Russian collusion was initially prepared as a magnificent distraction — remember the movie *Magnificent Obsession*. Well, this was a magnificent distraction from what was in those emails. And what was in those emails showed that Hillary stole the nomination from Bernie Sanders. So if you're going to look at why we have this, in my view, the worst president the United States has ever had in office, you can lay that at Hillary Clinton. Because had she not stolen the nomination from Bernie Sanders, we would be looking at a President Bernie Sanders now. We would not be looking at the terrible situation both domestically and abroad. So don't blame the Russians, for God's sake, without any evidence. Blame Hillary Clinton.

WOODS: All right, Ray, thank you very much. David, you have, I don't know, a reasonable amount — I was going to say three minutes, but there's no clock running — a reasonable amount of time to what Ray just said.

PAKMAN: Yeah, so listen. It's difficult in a sense to respond to what Ray said, because it has very, very little to do with any of what's actually going on with Russia. So let's see if I can just look at a few of the points that Ray made. And a lot of these points, I'm having sort of a little bit of trouble parsing the narrative, because there were a lot of things that were kind of just all over the place.

So first and foremost, Ray talked about the DNC primary being rigged against Bernie Sanders and for Hillary Clinton. I agree with him. I reported on that extensively. I voted for Bernie Sanders. I don't know if Bernie Sanders would have defeated Donald Trump in a general election race. It would have been a different race, but it has no bearing whatsoever on, for example, the Trump Tower meeting and its legality. So that's first and foremost.

The idea that there is no sort of chain of custody of hacked information between Russian actors and the Trump campaign is just patently untrue. We have extensive reporting about the direct connection between both Roger Stone, a Trump advisor, and Donald Trump, Jr. and WikiLeaks' Julian Assange. We have learned a great deal about the intermediary between the hacker known as Guccifer 2.0 and WikiLeaks, and we have extensive information about the actions of that hacker who tried to present himself as a Romanian individual but indeed was actually a Russian individual. But again, it has no actual bearing on, for example, whether the Trump Tower meeting was illegal.

Ray also mentioned that, hey listen, if you're going to talk about opposition research, which I did, you also have to talk about the fact that Hillary Clinton also bought opposition research. Whether Hillary Clinton also did opposition research has no bearing whatsoever on whether the Trump Tower meeting was illegal or whether the firings that took place to end the investigation by Robert Mueller constitute obstruction of justice.

Ray also talked about fired FBI Director James Comey and whether James Comey did or didn't act in good faith. It's a great conversation to have. It's one I'm open to having, but whether James Comey did or didn't act in good faith is simply not an argument that relates to what the Trump campaign objectively did.

And Ray started his presentation by saying that Russian leaders who he's been following for a very, very long time have always tried to sow chaos in Western democracies. That's absolutely true. If you look at Aleksandr Dugin's book *The Foundations of Geopolitics* from 1997, you see that this has been the Russian M.O. for a very long time. But again, it is simply not an argument that negates or refutes any of the facts that I put forward. So I think that what Ray has brought up are all interesting topics and relevant in a certain context, but they in no way actually relate to what we're discussing today.

And finally, and then I'll turn this over, Tom, the idea that the Steele dossier had only inaccuracies in it has been widely debunked, and every week we learn about another element of that dossier that has actually been confirmed. The Carter Page trips to Moscow and meetings with Russian officials, Michael Cohen's role in pursuing business opportunities for Trump in Russia, the allegations that were initially denied by Trump that he had spent several nights in Moscow in 2013 around that pageant, which was initially completely denied by Trump. We now know from airplane records that it's actually true. In other words, every week, another element of the Steele dossier is confirmed to be true, so on the facts that Ray tried to assert to contradict me, I think he's wrong on the facts. And then most of what he said just doesn't actually relate to the discussion today.

WOODS: All right, Ray, now you have several minutes to respond to David.

MCGOVERN: Sure. Let me just respond to some of these points. Robert Mueller has a reputation. I won't go into that. Let's talk about Comey right now. Now, the celebrated charge is that Trump fired Comey because he wanted to suppress the investigation. Now, what really happened? What really happened was on the 6th of January, 2017, the intelligence directors went and briefed President-Elect Trump. It was Comey, it was John Brennan of CIA, it was Rogers from NSA, and — who's the other person? Well, it was Clapper, who sits over all this stuff as National Intelligence Director. Now, Comey has made it clear that he asked the others to leave after they had briefed him on this, as I say, the worst piece of intelligence analysis, fact and evidence impoverished which said that Putin really wanted Trump to win and interfered.

After they had briefed him on that, then Comey says, by his own admission, that he raised the urination tapes, the business about now — This is how it happens, by the way, in Washington. When a new president comes in, the head of the FBI says, *Now, Mr. President-Elect, this is pretty scurrilous stuff, and we can't really — it's not confirmed, but you should know that we have this information, and the press has it too, and so you should just know that they say that you did A, B, and C.* Now, this is an old tactic, as I say, with new presidents by the deep state, represented in this case by Comey. Now, if I were Trump, I would have fired Comey on the spot. I'd say, "Don't bring me any unconfirmed, scurrilous information and try to intimidate me by saying that you've got this stuff and you thought that I should know about it. You're fired." Instead, he waited a while.

Now, when he did fire Comey, he admitted to one of the TV personalities: yeah, I fired him because of this Russia thing. Now, that was widely interpreted as his admission that he wanted to suppress this Russian investigation. It wasn't that. It was the Comey was trying to intimidate the president, trying to get a lever over him by saying: look, we've got this stuff here. We can't confirm it or anything. I would have fired him on the spot. As this thing plays out and the thing that I agree with David on this is that we have to let Mueller continue to play. But meanwhile, there have been some revelations which need to be addressed.

Let me talk about Guccifer 2.0. David says that he was a Russian. David, this is going to shock you, but Guccifer 2.0 was John Brennan of the CIA, and we can prove it. Do you know about — well, I won't ask you. There is a bevy of documents released in March of this year coming directly from the CIA. No one disputes its authenticity. It was given by an insider, probably a contractor. Julian Assange started publishing them in March. Now, what did they talk about? They talked about cyber tools that are in the arsenal that CIA deploys with the help of the NSA, which are the real experts. One, for example, allowed whoever wanted to do it to take control of a car and make it go 110 miles an hour and get the person killed in the car. Another one allowed people to snoop through a TV that was ostensibly off but was on, recording everything in your bedroom. But those were small potatoes.

On the 31st of March — and David, you can be forgiven for not knowing about this because *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, they all check with the CIA and say, "Can we print this?" They say, "No, no, don't print that." What did that say? This tool was called Marble Framework. Now, what did it work in? Well, it worked in five languages: Chinese, Persian, Korean, Arabic, and Russian Cyrillic. Now, what's the point here? The point here is that this tool, according to the CIA document, was designed to hack into other computers and other computer systems and "obfuscate" who attacked in and leave telltale signs in, like, ooh, Cyrillic, Russian, and other places, so that they can misattribute it to somebody else.

Now, Bill Binney, who knows a lot more about this kind of technology than I do — he was previous technical director of NSA — he tells me that it's very likely that the celebrated hack which was superimposed on Russian MS Word-equivalent templates and included the name of the first forerunner of the KGB in Russia, that that clearly was not done by some weird mistake by the Russian intelligence services, that it most likely was done by this cyber tool inventory that the CIA has and that it has deployed. So, you know, don't tell me about Guccifer 2.0 unless you really have looked into it. We have looked into it. The only outfit that claims this kind of thing is an outfit called CrowdStrike. That's run pretty much by DNC people, by the Atlantic Council people. These are the people who looked into the so-called hack, the hack that was described by John McCain as an act of war, described by John Bolton as a true act of war.

What did Comey do? What did Comey do? Well, he didn't secure the proper warrant to look at these DNC computers. Now, that's kind of embarrassing. Act of war? And so he's asked about this at Congress and the Senate. And they said, *Now, Director Comey, why is it that you didn't seize those computers or at least send your people in to look at how the hack happened?* And he squirmed and he said, *Well, I can see that that's best practice. You should actually have physical access to the computers, but there was a first-rate cyber team that was working on it.* First rate? Give me a break. CrowdStrike is as crooked as they come.

So you know, the last thing I'll say here is that you can be forgiven, David, because you get a lot of your information from *The New York Times*. Now, I'm from New York. My parents wouldn't go to bed at night without reading *The New York Times* through and through. If they fell asleep, they'd put it in a special place and they'd read that former day's edition before they'd even open the new one. *The New York Times* used to be all the news that was fit to print, almost. But no longer. And that's the real core here.

When I was still on active duty at the CIA, there was a fellow named William Casey who came in under Ronald Reagan. And at the first White House meeting, he announced to not only

Reagan, but the other cabinet-level officials this: "We'll know that our disinformation is complete when everything the American people believes is false." That's where we are now. How do I know that? From someone who was there, Barbara Honegger, and she gave it to one of the correspondents. It was published, but you know, just sort of like on page B17.

That's the deal here. If you're depending on *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, you are not hearing anything about, for example, how the House Intelligence Committee has come up with a yearlong investigation, the outcome of which is to dispute this notion that there's any evidence of the major premise, the major premise being that Putin preferred Trump and therefore sent his minions in to attack the cyber system of the DNC and so forth. So you know, it's really unfortunate, because I've never seen it quite this bad, and it's not incidental. We're talking about the other nuclear-powered country, and as long as hysteria is whipped up with no — I repeat, no provable evidence, than this is very dangerous, because people are being conditioned just as they were before the war in Iraq to believe that Putin is the equivalent of Saddam Hussein and we have to do something about it.

WOODS: All right, Ray, thank you very much. David, now is the part of our debate here where you can ask Ray any direct question you would like to ask him, and then Ray will have an opportunity to ask you a question.

PAKMAN: Yeah, I mean, listen, Tom, I apologize but I'm really struggle here to follow the thread, and there were just so many misstatements and allusions to conspiracy theories by Ray that I'm not in really — I would be in a position to sort of follow up with some of my concerns about what he said, but we're so far off the path here that I don't even know how I would put together one question for Ray at this point. Would I be allowed instead to maybe just respond to a few of the things that Ray said?

WOODS: If you'd prefer to do that, that's fine, but then Ray will be able to ask you whatever he wants. But if that's what you'd prefer —

PAKMAN: That's totally fine. I mean, listen, Ray insisted in that last bit on talking about James Comey, he claimed that it's simply not true that Trump fired Comey to suppress the investigation. Trump admitted that that's why he fired Comey on national television to Lester Holt, so the premise would be that Trump lied when he admitted what his motives were. I would be curious as to why. Like in other words, it's bad enough to admit to that. If you're going to falsely admit to that, there must be something even worse that is making you admit to something like that. Ray called into question the urination tape element of the dossier I think in an attempt to discredit the entire thing. But as I've said, I've already listed to you multiple elements of it that have been confirmed, so it's simply not an argument to say that, because the urination tapes are yet unconfirmed, that there's nothing true in the dossier.

I don't know that I'm prepared at this point to really get into a full discussion about the deep state that Ray referred to. But that's not a direction I'm really comfortable going in at this point simply because I think it's a total distraction and red herring. The idea that Guccifer 2.0 is former CIA Director John Brennan, I've seen no evidence of that whatsoever, and I would invite Ray to present evidence that he has of that and I'm willing to have my mind changed, but I think it's a completely spurious allegation. And then bigger picture, I just am not following the argument that Ray is making here that rebuts any of what I said, and so with that said, I'm glad to have Ray ask me any question he wants, but I'm really struggling here, Tom.

WOODS: Okay, well, listen, I'll give Ray — Ray, you have two minutes to respond, because we'll take that as like a question. You have two minutes just to respond to that, and then give David a question.

MCGOVERN: Okay. Conspiracy theories. Now, this is the way people dismiss the reality. The first time it was used by Allen Dulles. Where? Allen Dulles ran the Warren Commission looking into the assassination of John Kennedy. When people said, *Hey, how can you do this? The CIA may have been involved* — which it was, demonstrably involved. He said, *Oh, conspiracy theory, conspiracy theory, conspiracy theory*. And that's used to dismiss reality.

Now, this business about David saying that it's well known that to Lester Holt President Trump admitted, quoting David, that it was to suppress the investigation. You know, David, words are really important. You have to go back and look at what President Trump said. He said, and I quote, "Because of this Russian thing." Now, I think you'll have to admit that's ambiguous at best, but I think that the Russian thing was Mueller's determination with the rest of these people to discredit Trump, to say that he is falsely elected because the Russians helped. And that's very clear. It was because of the Russian thing, but not the Russian thing to suppress it, but because of Comey's bent to do this other thing.

Now, confirmed, the dossier, come on. Give me a break. It hasn't been confirmed. There's nothing in that that has been confirmed. Deep state? Well, look at the FBI texts. Look at the texts between Peter Strzok and his lover, Lisa Page. They were constructing a "insurance policy" in case Trump won. It's very clear. So it's not a conspiracy theory. It's not something dreamed up.

Now, I can understand why you don't know about Guccifer 2, because all you read is *The New York Times*. You probably don't even know about Vault 7 and the documents that are true documents, authentic that Julian Assange described as being more revealing than all the material that Edward Snowden brought out into Hong Kong. So I forgive you for not knowing about that. There is one brief story in *The Washington Post* about it, the headline of which said, "Recent revelation from Vault 7, Marble, that blows the whistle on the cover that the CIA has been using to hack into other systems." So read that, please, and see if you don't understand why it could be.

And as I say, this is not factual as Bill Binney usually is and I, but this is a very reasonable suspicion that since there's no evidence, zero of Russian hacking, that this celebrated hack, the one on July 5, 2016 bears the earmarks of the application of something called Vault 7 Marble Framework, which was developed by the CIA with great help from the NSA and which program includes 700 million lines of code. 700 million. Now, if you're talking \$25 a line, that's a lot of money. So let's leave it there. It's too bad we can't speak from the same base of knowledge, because as I say, *The New York Times* is not sufficient.

WOODS: Ray, can you transition into your question?

MCGOVERN: Okay, yeah. Let me just ask, David, have you ever heard of Vault 7 Marble Framework?

PAKMAN: Yes, I have.

MCGOVERN: Ah, you have. Okay, what do you think of it?

PAKMAN: I think that it is wholly unrelated to any of the case that I laid out here today, and I remain stunningly sort of confused as to going back to what I was thinking we were going to discuss. In what way does any of this relate to the legality or illegality of the Trump Tower meeting or whether obstruction of justice took place? I guess that's the part that I'm missing.

MCGOVERN: The Trump Tower meeting was set up by a music promoter on the false allegation that there would be real dirt revealed in this thing. The Trump Tower meeting is nothing. If Mueller thought the Trump Tower meeting meant something, he would have focused on it. Mueller has hit a dry well. Let's face it. And now he's circulated 49 questions —

PAKMAN: I mean, listen. None of that is true. These are just falsehoods. Mueller did not circulate any questions. Those 49 questions were actually taken down by Trump's lawyer, Jay Sekulow —

MCGOVERN: Where did he get them?

PAKMAN: He got them from —

MCGOVERN: From Mueller.

PAKMAN: The idea that those are questions —

MCGOVERN: Nobody disputes they came from the special counsel.

PAKMAN: Those were questions formulated by Donald Trump's lawyer as possible questions that would be asked based on the general topics that Robert Mueller's team communicated would be topics of discussion if ever Donald Trump sits down with Robert Mueller. But now Ray has already moved the goal post. He first said that Robert Mueller circulated 49 questions. Now he's saying the questions came from something Robert Mueller said. So very quickly you see, Tom, how a lot of these assertions just are changed when I just offered the most minute pushback.

MCGOVERN: Now, David, you just admitted that Trump's lawyers met with Mueller's lawyers —

PAKMAN: I don't know if it was a physical meeting or a phone call.

MCGOVERN: All right, well, they talked, okay? And Mueller's lawyers gave Trump's lawyers a very good idea, which Trump's lawyers composed into 49 questions that Mueller was interested in asking. Is that correct?

PAKMAN: That's my understanding of what happened.

MCGOVERN: No, look, *The New York Times* says that. They say they have six people to prove it, and nobody has denied it. So that's how these 49 questions arose. They are broad questions. They go into everything and anything, and they reflect to me a very desperate attempt to get the president to incriminate himself by saying a wrong fact that he doesn't remember correctly, and then you have the same thing —

PAKMAN: Yeah, but that's the perjury trap nonsense. Like the idea of a trap being laid —

MCGOVERN: Right, uh huh, that's not nonsense. That's the way Mueller and —

PAKMAN: Trump will either go in and tell the truth or not and say he doesn't remember if he doesn't remember, but the entire concept of a "perjury trap" is not something that's serious for discussion.

MCGOVERN: Oh, come on. That's what they used on the general. What's his name? The general who was National Security Advisor. That's what they used on him. See, they intercept this stuff —

PAKMAN: Ray, is your assertion that the only reason Michael Flynn got into trouble was not because he genuinely did things that were crimes but because a perjury trap was set for him and he fell for it? Is that really your argument here?

MCGOVERN: That's not my argument. Those are the facts, David.

PAKMAN: Okay.

MCGOVERN: Those are the facts. What he did in terms of consulting with foreign leaders was completely what any National Security Advisor incoming would do. What they did was they got him through an intercepted conversation which was unmasked, and they said, *Now, did you talk about sanctions?* And he said, *You know, no, I didn't.* So that's lying to the FBI. What'd they do next? They go, *Ah ha, okay, now we indict him, and now we can get him to talk about other things he knows.* And the other things he knew were not sufficiently incriminating, so that Mueller is —

PAKMAN: We don't know that yet.

MCGOVERN: Mueller is waiting till the end of the year so that he can go right through the election, get this thing percolating all that time. And the Senate Intelligence Committee, thankfully, has the documents. So if we wait and we'll see what the Senate Intelligence Committee does after they re-interview John Brennan and the others, I think we'll know a lot more, David. And you ought to really look at more than *The New York Times*.

WOODS: All right, listen, let me —

PAKMAN: I'm confused. Just two quick notes.

WOODS: Okay.

PAKMAN: Earlier in the debate, Ray criticized me for getting my news from *The New York Times*, and in his last statement, he told me that something is unquestionably true because it was reported by *The New York Times*. That's confusing.

MCGOVERN: I knew you'd catch that —

PAKMAN: One other contradiction —

MCGOVERN: I knew you'd catch that, but it is true—

PAKMAN: Right, I caught it during —

MCGOVERN: — *The New York Times* has five or six things and it's confirmed by the administration, then you can believe it.

PAKMAN: The one other thing I don't understand is, earlier during the conversation, Ray said he agreed with me that indeed the Robert Mueller investigation should continue, should go forward, and we should see where it ends up, but then he most recently said that it's a calculated move to go through the election, presumably to impact it. So if that's what you believe about the investigation, why do you agree with me that it shouldn't be allowed to continue?

MCGOVERN: Well, because the cost of ending it would be too politically volatile. Let the thing go. He's not going to come up with anything. The House has been at it for a whole year. They've come up with the decision that there was no meddling. The Senate, what are they doing? So let him go. Let him keep doing it. It's a political game. I don't give a rat's patootie about how they go; all I want to point out is that after a year, a guy like Mueller with the assets that he has and with his access and other really sensitive sources, if he can't come up with anything better than some Facebook operation, then that's sort of embarrassing.

WOODS: All right, let me jump in —

PAKMAN: Again, I mean —

WOODS: I'd like to reassert control here, if I may, because David, let me start — I'm going to ask each of you a question, but I'm going to ask Ray a question, and maybe it's the kind of question that you would want to have asked him for clarification. So, Ray, have there been any meetings that you know of between Trump people and Russian operatives or Russian officials that give you any kind of pause?

MCGOVERN: That give me some pause? Sure, yeah. They don't give me any evidence, though.

WOODS: Well, let's flesh that out a bit. What is something that concerns you? Give me a specific example.

MCGOVERN: Well, I think that Trump, Jr. was stupid in rising to the bait to meet with this lawyer. He was promised by some music promoter, as I recall, that oh, there'd be some dirt on Hillary Clinton. And so he should have said, "We'll look into this thing," and not — So that gives me some pause. But you know, we intelligence analysts, like detectives, look at evidence, and that's what Mueller actually has been doing. He's come up a cropper. He's come up with zero except for these really extraneous things. What does Stormy Daniels have to do with collusion between Trump and the Russians? What does Manafort, what does the fact that Trump, well before anyone suspected he would be a presidential candidate, fooling around with money laundering or deals with the Russians, who care about that? It has no relevance to the situation unless there's some tie that proves that this put a handle on later candidate and now President Trump. It's very bizarre. It reminds me very much of the weapons of mass

destruction before the war in Iraq. Everybody believed it because that's what *The New York Times* and the major media told them. It's even worse now.

WOODS: All right, David, let me ask you a question. And I realize that of course this question doesn't really strike at the heart of what you've been arguing, but it's still something that's on my mind, and I'd just like to know your thoughts on it. There are some of us out there who are concerned, regardless of the merits of the case — in fact, let's assume for the sake of argument, set aside the merits of the case. There are people — we believe that there are a lot of influential folks who seem to want to prevent some kind of détente or reconciliation between the United States and Russia, and some of those people I think who don't really know that many of the details are pushing — like you know, the sort of people you would encounter in the press or on social media — are pushing the Russiagate story because they think it'll throw a monkey wrench in the works to make it more difficult for Trump to try to negotiate better relations with Russia.

Now, my primary issue when I think about political candidates and politics, my primary issue is war and peace. I think we've had way too much war. I think almost all of the war has been based on propaganda, and I think I've been vindicated time after time. And it's my concern that this momentum is being used to tie Trump's hands to make it harder to do what he may want to do, I suppose, which is to bring about better relations with Russia. What do you — are you concerned about that, that, again, regardless of the merits of the case — maybe your side is completely correct or your suspicions are entirely warranted. But is there at least a concern that, unfortunately, it seems to play into the hands of some really bad dudes, if I may put it that way?

PAKMAN: If you're asking me whether I am in any way supportive of choosing to have poor relations with a country when that's not what the facts dictate we should have, the answer is of course not. If the question is do I think that there are individuals who are acting in bad faith when it comes to Trump-Russia, I think the answer is absolutely yes to people on both sides of the political aisle. And we don't have time to really delve into the details as to why. And whether I have a particular opinion as to what any individual has as a motive for talking about Trump-Russia, I can only speak to my motives, and they don't fall under the umbrella of what you're describing.

WOODS: All right, we've gone longer than I —

MCGOVERN: Tom, can I just make one short comment?

WOODS: If it's under a minute, yes.

MCGOVERN: Okay. Both sides of the aisle. I have to really clarify that in the intelligence analysis profession, not intelligence operations, but intelligence analysis, there is no aisle. This may sound sort of obsolete or outdated, but we seek the truth. And you know, it's very embarrassing for me to be being accused of either a Putin or a Trump apologist, because I think Trump is the very worst president we ever had. I have nine grandchildren. They're not going to have clean air to breathe when they get to be my age. This is serious, okay? But I don't want Trump to be accused falsely of doing something that he didn't do. Call me nostalgic or something, but I seek the truth. There's lots of reason to impeach this guy to get rid of him, but not because of this drummed up story to explain largely why Hillary Clinton lost the election.

WOODS: All right, now, as I've said, I've probably kept you guys more than I said I would, and so I don't want to trespass too much further on your time. But I do want to give each of you — and on this I'm going to be a real stickler. I am going to have a clock. I'm going to give each of you three minutes to wrap up what you want people to think about as we conclude today. So David, we'll start with you.

PAKMAN: Yeah, I don't need nor do I even have the full three minutes. I do have to get to produce my show. I think the only thing that in the context of this interview I would say is, when you listen to the interview, and if you have to go back and listen to it again, explore whether any of my assertions were actually rebutted by anything Ray said. On a lot of the issues, you'll see that they were not. On the ones where it sounds like they were, just Google the issue before you make a decision.

WOODS: Okay, so Ray, you've got three minutes to wrap up from your side.

MCGOVERN: Sure. Well, Tom, I guess I would just say that we need to be fact-based here. When David says, Google the answers, well, you know, people need to realize that if they Google the answers, they're not going to come across the things I said. It'll all be from *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. So the questions that I would request that listeners think about was, number one, when was an allegation made about Manafort or Page or whatever? What does that have to do with whether Trump and his campaign colluded with Russia? That's one of the big things here. Most of this stuff has no remote — unless you get a guy like Manafort, who seems to be a crook from the day one, guilty of all kinds of money laundering and everything else. And you know, the tactic there is for Mueller to get him aside and say, "Look, if you tell us about Russian collusion, we'll let you off with less than we could get you for."

So the whole thing is a construct initially begun when Hillary Clinton thought that she could win the election by criticizing Trump for being open to dealing with the Russians, and then for a very, very successful attempt to disguise what happened with respect to WikiLeaks revelations about how she and her campaign — witness the fact that the top five people at the DNC quit on the spot — colluded to make sure that Bernie Sanders would not win. Now, Bernie Sanders in my view would have been a shoe-in over Donald Trump, and so these things are consequential. And when I say that Bernie Sanders would have been better than Donald Trump, I don't think any proof is needed to indicate that.

And so one has to go back to the beginning, where these charges originated, the purpose for which they were manufactured, how the intelligence people helped the DNC do this, and I would just say: stay tuned, because if we can believe Nunez, who is the head of the House Intelligence Committee, he's got the documents. And what we see in Comey's book and what we see in a lot of the defense kind of stuff from the FBI and the DOJ is sort of a preemptive attack to pour doubt on the documents that Nunez says he has and some of which he has already referred to the Department of Justice for prosecution of the Deputy Director of the FBI, James Comey's deputy, McCabe.

So there's a lot, and my sorrow is simply this: that when I think back at how we tried to educate the American people to the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction and that the charges that Saddam Hussein was in touch with al-Qaeda was spurious and ridiculous on their face, we could not get into the major media. Can we get in the major media now? We can not only not get into the major media, Tom; we can't get on Amy Goodman, for God's

sake. So even the alternative media doesn't want to hear that there's some real doubt as to whether Trump colluded with the Russians. There's not only real doubt; there's no evidence that that was the case.

WOODS: All right, well, my thanks to both of you gentlemen, David and Ray, for your time today. You've both been very generous, and we appreciate it. Thank you.

MCGOVERN: Most welcome.

PAKMAN: Appreciate it, thank you.