

## Katy Barr the Door\* By Steven Jonas

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As is widely known, Donald J. Trump hired William Barr as his personal lawyer inside the Justice Department (oops, I mean Attorney General) for one reason only: to try to shut down the Mueller investigation entirely and prevent any of its findings/reports from reaching the light of day.

Lacking achievement of that objective (and it could have existed only in Trump's head, and perhaps the heads of one or more of his children and his acolytes at Fox"News"), Barr's assignment was: a) to short circuit Mueller's work to the extent possible and b) to make as light of the findings as possible. (Let me point out here, that for the most part I don't enter a claim for total originality in this column, only for certain bits and pieces and for the ordering of the items in it.)

As to the first objective, it is very likely that the probe came to what is really a sudden end, not because Mueller was finished, but because, as he has the power to do, Barr cut the budget, sharply. Indications of budget cuts? For one, Andrew Weisman's sudden departure. Indications that Mueller was not anywhere near finished? Well, extending Rick Gates' sentencing until May for one. For another, he did have the indictment of Roger Stone hanging out there. But now the chances of/opportunity for his "flipping" have become sharply diminished. As to the second Trumpite objective, with the release of the "Barr Letter" we don't know what the Mueller Reports says, even in general terms. We only know what Barr says it says (and that, of course is why Trump hired him in the first place).

Of course, the demands for the release of the full document (ex any redactions that need to be made to protect national security) came almost immediately, from a wide variety of sources. And as John Dean, Nixon White House counsel turned State's evidence, said: "We haven't really seen the underlying report, but I have some suspicions that the reason he [Barr] boiled this down the way he did is because it's not very attractive. . . . [Mueller's] words are very different than Barr's, I suspect."

Indeed. And there will be a very simple indicator of the truth or lack thereof of that statement: the degree to which the Trumpites fight to prevent the release of the whole Report. If they have nothing to hide, they should want the full document made public. Of course, as has been frequently noted, the Trumpites' constant campaign-of-destruction against Mueller and the probe indicate the strong possibility that there is more than one election-undermining plot plus who knows what else (see for example Michael Cohen's testimony, and well beyond that, what's in the documents of his that the Federal, and now New York State, authorities have) that the Trumpites don't want revealed.

And so, the process proceeds (covered in a bit more detail just below). The House investigations will continue, accompanied of course by demands for the full Report (plus other materials, like Trump's tax returns). Unless they too are shut down Barr (and don't count that out) the investigations by Southern District of New York, the Eastern District of Virginia, and the District of Columbia (and who knows what other possible Federal jurisdictions) will proceed, along with the those of the New York State Attorney General and possibly other state A.G.'s as well. Like New Jersey, where Trump's casinos crashed and burned. It now happens to have a Democratic administration.

The Trumpites will be screaming: "EXONERATION," "LEAKS," "THE DOSSIER," "Witch hunt," "harassment," "never should have been started," "Democratic plot," and so on and so forth. But unfortunately for them, whether or not the full Mueller Report is ever made public, as is well-known Trump faces an ever-mounting pile of other legal difficulties. Some of them are listed for reference here:

1. The convictions or admissions of guilt, for everything from perjury to false statements to Congress or the FBI, to tax fraud, either on Trump's behalf or somehow connected directly or indirectly, to a Trump activity/interest: George Papadopoulos, Mike Flynn, Mike Cohen, Paul Manafort, Mike Cohen, and Rick Gates.
2. The evidence, from Mike Cohen and potentially others (like Felix Sater and Alan Weisselberg) that Trump was negotiating for a Trump Tower Moscow deal during the Presidential Campaign, in exchange for what? That Trump was telling the U.S. electorate that he had "no business with Russia" is an interesting sidelight, but obviously not criminal.
3. As best as we can make out, according to the Internal Revenue Service "under audit" is no impediment to releasing one's tax returns. Surely Trump has nothing to hide in them, does he? So, if that's the case, why not just go ahead and release them? But crimes might be hidden there, like simple tax evasion by understating annual income(s). Of course, that's another reason why Barr might have barred the door: he didn't want Mueller turning over such a case to another Federal prosecutor.
4. On that famous "Trump Tower meeting." We don't yet know whether or not Trump knew about it for sure (although surely, if Don Jr. didn't report on it that would likely be the only time something significant happened at a meeting involving either their business or the campaign where Jr. didn't report it to Dad), just to satisfy everyone who wants to know just what went on in it --- given that of course nothing illegal, potentially illegal, or unethical took place, that might just be considered by some --- if not Mueller himself --- "collusion."
5. Then there are the payoffs to Karen McDougal and Stephanie Clifford, and the "Mike Cohen checks," would could indicate anything from bank fraud to election campaign law violations.
6. Then there's the possible sub-borning of perjury to Michael Cohen.
7. As for the Cohen documents, as far as we know, Mueller didn't look at them. That was an SDNY operation.
8. And then we get to the tax fraud (e.g., understating your assets/income), bank fraud (e.g., overstating assets to obtain loans, see Deutsche Bank, and oops, they will shortly be turning over records to several different agencies), insurance fraud (overstating the value of property lost) --- all, according to Cohen at least, and he does claim to have documentation, undertaken by Trump at one time or another. Then there is possible involvement in money-laundering, for which Deutsche Bank has been well-known. Deutsche Bank has already paid \$630 million in fines for laundering Russian money from various sources.
9. And then we come to "The Dossier." Which is still out there, despite Trump's good buddy at Fox"News," Sean Hannity, who keeps hammering away on it as the product of a Clinton Plot (when actually the initial funding to Christopher Steele came from a Republican source. Clinton picked it up only when Trump won the nomination and the "Never-Trump" campaign came to an end, temporarily). The New Yorker's Jane Mayer, yes the same Jane Mayer who just wrote the big expose about the almost incestuous relationship Trump has with Fox"News", just about a year ago wrote an extensive column that showed that a lot of what Steele came up with did have a basis in fact.
10. Finally, Trump has a lot riding on John Roberts, Chief Justice. Now, because of Trump's two far-right appointees, he holds what passes for the "swing vote" on the Supreme Court. A whole bunch of document-access issues in re Trump are likely to come before it, from the release of the full Mueller Report, to the release of Trump's income tax records, to the validity of House Committee subpoenas for documentation, and so on and so forth. At that point, John Roberts will become one of the single most important personas in US history.

So, wondering why Trump is still screaming bloody murder even though Barr caste as favorable a light on the (still-unseen) Report that could be cast. This list represents a healthy menu of reasons.

\* The phrase "Katy bar the door!" (also as Katy bar the gate!; sometimes written as Katie) is a very American exclamation, more common in the South than elsewhere, meaning that disaster impends, and so 'watch out,' 'get ready for trouble,' or 'a desperate situation is at hand.' [It may come from] a traditional [medieval Scottish] ballad usually entitled 'Get Up and Bar the Door,' which is still widely known and sung."