

# Stone Arrest Exposes the Cancer Eating American Criminal Justice

by Conrad Black



**Last week's arrest of Roger Stone** at the behest of Special Counsel Robert Mueller incites me to recall Joseph Welch's famous question of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy at the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you no decency?"

Sending 29 FBI agents in bullet-proof protective gear and brandishing submachine guns at 6 a.m. to the house where Stone—who is 66 and does not own a firearm—lives with his wife, two dogs, and three cats, to effect another shakedown arrest for alleged untruths uttered by Stone to a congressional committee since Mueller was installed in his

totalitarian sinecure, was disgusting and un-American.

The charges could have been laid—and if there is the slightest truth to them, *should* have been laid—by contacting Stone's lawyer during normal business hours and asking him to produce his client for charging and processing. So slight was the risk of flight (Stone claims his passport has expired), the judge set bail at an easily manageable (for him) \$250,000, which was produced at once. The entire hideous procedure, as if Stone were a suspected violent criminal with vast resources, at the head of a heavily armed and dangerous organization, and in a home extensively guarded by armed and experienced gangsters and with a helicopter in the backyard, was an outrage that must shock every civilized American, as it astounds the civilized world.

There was absolutely no need or excuse for such an absurd and repulsive use of force in effecting the arrest of a man with no history of violence who is an improbable flight risk and certain to surrender quietly and respond to allegations against him through due process in the courts. Moreover, he is fully entitled to the constitutional presumption of innocence.

### **Media Collusion**

This shock-and-awe extravaganza was leaked in advance to the chief media arm of the Democratic Party, CNN, (though MSNBC is a rival in rabid support of the enemies of the Trump regime). CNN's unctuous claim that it was able to capture this pre-dawn thuggery thanks to the clever intuition of a reporter who could deploy a film crew to a Fort Lauderdale residence before dawn on a hunch is as wildly implausible as the rest of the network's political "news" (which could be described better as a partisan screed of relentless fervor and acoustic, not to mention cognitive, irritation).

Mueller, a generally respected former head of the FBI, certainly knows his way around the minefields of Washington politics and legal IEDs. For him to sanction such a farcical

and exaggerated arrest, assuring it would be filmed as if it were a patriotic mission on par with the courageous lads going ashore at D-Day or Iwo Jima, confirms unsettling impressions about Mueller's mental stability. (I believe every other reasonable observer gave up on the *raison d'être* and ostensible purpose of the special counsel's investigation at least 18 months ago.)

People who might be vulnerable and have known—or claim to have known—the president are indicted for unrelated conduct and then browbeaten and threatened with indictments of their families, unbearable legal costs, and endless media smears to invent inculpatory testimony against the president, with a guarantee of immunity from prosecution for perjury. This is the standard playbook of American prosecutors. It has been denounced repeatedly and every informed person in the country knows about it, but nobody does or says anything consequential.

American criminal justice is a cancer and Robert Mueller and his acolytes, James Comey and Patrick Fitzgerald (Comey's lawyer now but a former U.S. attorney), are eminent and eager carriers of the disease. Paul Manafort, even if he is a tax-cheat, deserves the Presidential Medal of Freedom for resisting Mueller's sadistic isolation and persecution of him. Someday he and other resisters such as G. Gordon Liddy, who defied the Watergate railroading exercise, will be recognized as heroes of American justice.

### **An Endless *Danse Macabre***

No one disputes that the United States must have a system capable of addressing serious wrongdoing by politicians and their supporters, and the complete absence of such processes and personnel would endanger the integrity of the democratic process. Moreover, there is nothing officially to be done about the unwavering political bigotry of the national political media. Their sense of unease is understandable: Donald Trump has end-run them with the social media, knocking

from their hands the lethal swords of political media assassination. He attacks them as unwaveringly, and a good deal more entertainingly, than they attack him. They do have, as do we all, some reason to worry at times about this president's judgment, though there is no justification at all to question the legitimacy of his election or the legality of his conduct as candidate, president-elect, or president.

This *danse macabre* of the ludicrously numerous and over-armed FBI agents filmed by invitation by the CNN propaganda service in their strenuous exercise to frighten Roger Stone's cats and dogs raises the questions of what Mueller and his entirely partisan Democratic lynch-mob, some of whose most prominent members have been exposed and disgraced and fired, think they are now doing.

Whenever the suggestion that it might be time to wind down this stupor-inducing affront to the Bill of Rights starts to get determinedly to its feet in full voice, Mueller vanishes from sight. He leaves it to the Trump-hating media to canvass members of Congress, always recruiting one of the politically endangered NeverTrump Republicans to provide the patina of bipartisanship with a cameo flirtation for public attention, to repeat the tired pieties that "We don't know what we don't know," and "Let Bob Mueller finish his work."

The fact is, after 30 months of this investigation we do have a pretty good idea of what we don't know—that there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and anyone in Russia, and that what Mueller has been doing for almost two years doesn't meet the normal criteria for work. But these are not much mentioned.

### **The Wheels of Justice Grind Slowly**

Depressing and monstrous though this entire ghastly burlesque of Madisonian public service and accountability has been, there are two young green shoots of hope.

Despite Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) and Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) pawing the ground and sounding the trumpets like the legendary warrior of Jericho about a deluge of subpoenas on the White House, they are no more effectual or even visible on the propaganda networks than when they were leaders of the minority on the House judiciary and intelligence committees.

Even better still, the Department of Justice has been emancipated from the official eunuch, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and the 360-degree-conflicted Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, joined at the hip with Robert Mueller through much of his public career.

The return to non-stop, wall-to-wall barracking of the president by former intelligence chiefs John Brennan and James Clapper this past week has made the point more delicious and mouth-watering: they both lied to Congress, as did Hillary Clinton and many other leading Trump-haters to federal officials. The House committees have no standing systematically to irritate the president. But Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and attorney general designate William Barr have promised to get to the bottom of the ant-hill of Democratic skullduggery and chicanery, and they will do it.

Mueller may torment formerly active Trump supporters, threaten their families, and produce droolingly narrated police raids. But they have all devoured the nothingburger. The impartial exposure, demolition, and—where appropriate—prosecution, conviction, and imprisonment of those who, in their Trump-hating fanaticism, have debased national institutions will begin as the ability of Mueller, Brennan, and Clapper to distract the media ends. At least, as the whole correlation of legal and media forces changes, the Clintons, comparative professionals as they are, maintain a dignified discretion.

The wheels of justice grind slowly, but they still turn, and not in contemptible publicity stunts like the shaming arrest

of Roger Stone (whether he is guilty of anything or not).  
Mueller's answer to Mr. Welch's question (like Senator  
McCarthy's) is: Apparently not.

First published in