

Moon-Strzok No More, Lisa Page Spills the Beans

The meaning of a crucial text message between two FBI officials appears to have been finally explained, and it's not good news for the Russia-gate faithful, as Ray McGovern explains.

By Ray McGovern

Special to Consortium News



Former FBI attorney Lisa Page has reportedly told a joint committee of the House of Representatives that when FBI counterintelligence official Peter Strzok texted her on May 19, 2017 saying there was “no big there there,” he meant there was no evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

It was clearly a bad-luck day for Strzok, when on Friday the 13th this month Page gave her explanation of the text to the House Judiciary and Oversight/Government Reform Committees and in effect threw her lover, Strzok, under the bus.

Strzok's apparent admission to Page about there being “no big there there” was reported on Friday by John Solomon in the Opinion section of *The Hill* based on multiple sources who he said were present during Page's closed door interview.

Strzok's text did not come out of the blue. For the previous ten months he and his FBI subordinates had been trying every-which-way to ferret out some “there” – preferably a big “there” – but had failed miserably. If Solomon's sources are accurate, it is appearing more and more likely that there was nothing left for them to do but to make it up out of whole cloth, with the baton then passed to special counsel Robert Mueller.

The “no there there” text came just two days after former FBI Director James Comey succeeded in getting his friend Mueller appointed to investigate the alleged collusion that Strzok was all but certain wasn't there.

Robert Parry, the late founder and editor of Consortium News whom Solomon described to me last year as his model for journalistic courage and professionalism, was already able to discern as early as March 2017 the outlines of what is now Deep State-gate, and, typically, was the first to dare report on its implications.

Parry's article, written two and a half months before Strzok texted the self-incriminating comment to Page on there being “no big there there,” is a case

study in professional journalism. His very first sentence entirely anticipated Strzok's text: "The hysteria over 'Russia-gate' continues to grow ... but at its core there may be **no there there.**"(Emphasis added.)

As for "witch-hunts," Bob and others at Consortiumnews.com, who didn't succumb to the virulent HWHW (Hillary Would Have Won) virus, and refused to slurp the Kool-Aid offered at the deep Deep State trough, have come close to being burned at the stake – virtually. Typically, Bob stuck to his guns: he ran an organ (now vestigial in most Establishment publications) that sifted through and digested actual evidence and expelled drivel out the other end.

Those of us following the example set by Bob Parry are still taking a lot of incoming fire – including from folks on formerly serious – even progressive – websites. Nor do we expect a cease-fire now, even with Page's statement (about which, ten days after her interview, the Establishment media keep a timorous silence). Far too much is at stake.

As Mark Twain put it, "It is easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled." And, as we have seen over the past couple of years, that goes in spades for "Russia-gate." For many of us who have looked into it objectively and written about it dispassionately, we are aware, that on this issue, we are looked upon as being in sync with President Donald Trump.

Blind hatred for the man seems to thwart any acknowledgment that he could ever be right about something—anything. This brings considerable awkwardness. Chalk it up to the price of pursuing the truth, no matter what bedfellows you end up with.

Courage at *The Hill*

Solomon's article merits a careful read, *in toto*. Here are the most germane paragraphs:

"It turns out that what Strzok and Lisa Page were really doing that day [May 19, 2017] was debating whether they should stay with the FBI and try to rise through the ranks to the level of an assistant director (AD) or join Mueller's special counsel team. [Page has since left the FBI.]

"'Who gives a f*ck, one more AD [Assistant Director] like [redacted] or whoever?'" Strzok wrote, weighing the merits of promotion, before apparently suggesting what would be a more attractive role: 'An investigation leading to impeachment?' ...

"A few minutes later Strzok texted his own handicap of the Russia evidence: 'You and I both know the odds are nothing. If I thought it was likely, I'd be there

no question. I hesitate in part because of my gut sense and concern there's no big there there.'

"So the FBI agents who helped drive the Russia collusion narrative – as well as Rosenstein's decision to appoint Mueller – apparently knew all along that the evidence was going to lead to 'nothing' and, yet, they proceeded because they thought there was still a possibility of impeachment."

Solomon adds: "How concerned you are by this conduct is almost certainly affected by your love or hatred for Trump. But put yourself for a second in the hot seat of an investigation by the same FBI cast of characters: You are under investigation for a crime the agents don't think occurred, but the investigation still advances because the desired outcome is to get you fired from your job. Is that an FBI you can live with?"

The Timing

As noted, Strzok's text was written two days after Mueller was appointed on May 17, 2017. The day before, on May 16, *The New York Times* published a story that Comey leaked to it through an intermediary that was expressly designed (as Comey admitted in Congressional testimony three weeks later) to lead to the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. HmMMMM.

Had Strzok forgotten to tell his boss that after ten months of his best investigative efforts – legal and other—he could find no "there there"?

Comey's leak, by the way, was about alleged pressure from Trump on Comey to go easy on Gen. Michael Flynn for lying at an impromptu interrogation led by – you guessed it – the ubiquitous, indispensable Peter Strzok.

In any event, the operation worked like a charm – at least at first. And – absent revelation of the Strzok-Page texts – it might well have continued to succeed. After Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein named Mueller, one of Comey's best buddies, to be special counsel, Mueller, in turn, picked Strzok to lead the Russia-gate team, until the summer, when the Department of Justice Inspector General was given the Strzok-Page texts and refused to sit on them.

A Timeline

Here's a timeline, which might be helpful:

2017

May 16: Comey leak to NY Times to get a special counsel appointed

May 17: Special counsel appointed – namely, Robert Mueller.

May 19: Strzok confides to girlfriend Page, “No big there there.”

July: Mueller appoints Strzok lead FBI Agent on collusion investigation.

August: Mueller removes Strzok after learning of his anti-Trump texts to Page.

Dec. 12: DOJ IG releases some, but by no means all, relevant Strzok-Page texts to Congress and the media, which first reports on Strzok’s removal in August.

2018

June 14: DOJ IG Report Published.

June 15; Strzok escorted out of FBI Headquarters.

June 21: Attorney General Jeff Sessions announces Strzok has lost his security clearances.

July 12: Strzok testifies to House committees. Solomon reports he refused to answer question about the “there there” text.

July 13: Lisa Page interviewed by same committees. Answers the question.

Earlier: Bob Parry in Action

On December 12, 2017, as soon as first news broke of the Strzok-Page texts, Bob Parry and I compared notes by phone. We agreed that this was *quite big* and that, clearly, Russia-gate had begun to morph into something like FBI-gate. It was rare for Bob to call me before he wrote; in retrospect, it seemed to have been merely a sanity check.

The piece Bob posted early the following morning was typical Bob. Many of those who click on the link will be surprised that, last December, he already had pieced together most of the story. Sadly, it turned out to be Bob’s last substantive piece before he fell seriously ill. Earlier last year he had successfully shot down other Russia-gate-related canards on which he found Establishment media sorely lacking – “Facebook-gate,” for example.

Remarkably, it has taken another half-year for Congress and the media to address – haltingly – the significance of Deep State-gate – however easy it has become to dissect the plot, and identify the main plotters. With Bob having prepared the way with his Dec.13 article, I followed up a few weeks later with “The FBI Hand Behind Russia-gate,” in the process winning no friends among those still suffering from the highly resistant HWHW virus.

VIPS

Parry also deserves credit for his recognition and appreciation of the unique expertise and analytical integrity among Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) and giving us a secure, well respected home at Consortium News.

It is almost exactly a year since Bob took a whole lot of flak for publishing what quickly became VIPS' most controversial, and at the same time perhaps most important, Memorandum For the President; namely, "Intelligence Veterans Challenge 'Russia Hack' Evidence."

Critics have landed no serious blows on the key judgments of that Memorandum, which rely largely on the type of forensic evidence that Comey failed to ensure was done by his FBI because the Bureau never seized the DNC server. Still more forensic evidence has become available over recent months soon to be revealed on Consortium News, confirming our conclusions.

Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. He was a CIA analyst for 27 years and, in retirement, co-founded Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

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