

FBI raid on home of former Trump campaign chairman

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FBI agents raided the home of Paul Manafort, former campaign chairman for Donald Trump, in late July, the *Washington Post* reported Wednesday. The raid was conducted in the pre-dawn hours of Wednesday, July 26, shortly after Manafort met voluntarily with the staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The raid was based on a search warrant obtained by Justice Department special counsel Robert Mueller, who heads the federal investigation into allegations that the Russian government interfered in the US presidential election and that representatives of the Trump campaign collaborated in efforts to damage their Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton.

According to the *Post* report, “The search warrant was wide-ranging and FBI agents working with special counsel Robert Mueller departed the home with various records.” At least some of the documents seized in the raid had already been turned over to congressional investigators.

The precise reason for the raid is not clear, but the timing suggests that Mueller was concerned that Manafort had been alerted by the meeting with the Senate staff about the direction his investigation was taking and might withhold or destroy documents before they could be obtained through a grand jury subpoena.

It is equally likely that the raid was intended as a show of force to intimidate Manafort and other potential witnesses in the Russia investigation. If that was the case, it appears to have had the desired effect: Manafort has made no public comment on the raid and there was no media publicity for nearly two weeks, until the brief report appeared in the *Post*.

Manafort has already provided documents to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Senate Intelligence Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, which are investigating various aspects of the alleged

Russian interference and the claims of Trump campaign collusion with Moscow.

The *Post* reported that these documents included notes that Manafort took from a June 2016 meeting with Donald Trump Jr. and a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower.

Manafort is the Trump campaign official with the longest and highest-level connections with wealthy Russians and pro-Russian elements in Ukraine, including the former president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, who was driven out of office in 2014 in a US-backed right-wing coup.

Press reports suggest that Mueller is investigating a number of financial matters involving Manafort but unrelated to Russia and the Trump campaign, including the mortgage on his home in the Hamptons and payments for his work as a political adviser in Ukraine.

This tends to confirm speculation in the American press that Manafort is a prime target of the Mueller investigation, which wants to turn him into a major witness against Trump as the anti-Russian campaign unfolds.



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