

Roger Stone Arrested on Seven Criminal Charges of an Indictment in the Mueller Investigation

On Friday, January twenty-fifth, special counsel Robert S. Mueller III disclosed criminal charges against Roger Stone which indicted him of lying, obstruction, and witness tampering. Stone, a close friend of President Trump's and an experienced Republican political agent, was accused of attempting to gather information about hacked emails belonging to the Democratic Party, which were then to be reported to an unnamed senior Trump campaign official.

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta, accused Stone of having prior knowledge of the publishing of Podesta's private emails by WikiLeaks. Even after he sent tweets suggesting that he did know about the hack, Stone denied having known anything about the hack. During this time, he also denied having any connection to Russian intelligence.

In February 2017, it was reported that the FBI had begun investigating contacts Stone may have had with Russian agents. A month later, it was reported that Stone had exchanged direct messages with an alleged DNC hacker. This hacker, known better as Guccifer 2.0 on Twitter, was immediately assumed to be a persona made by Russian intelligence to make its role in the hack less obvious. Stone confessed to having exchanged messages with the individual, but claimed that the messages were simply guiltless praise of the hacking. Guccifer 2.0 was eventually associated with an IP address which was found to be linked with GRU, a Russian intelligence agency in Moscow.

On July third, 2018, U.S. District Court Judge Ellen Huvelle dismissed a lawsuit brought by Protect Democracy, a political activist group made up of former White House and Administration lawyers, as well as experienced constitutional litigators. The lawsuit alleged that Stone schemed with Russia and WikiLeaks to publish hacked DNC emails during the 2016 presidential election race. The judge found that the suit was brought in the wrong jurisdiction.

The twenty-four-page-long indictment released earlier this year reminds readers that prior to Stone's alleged actions, the Democratic National Committee made an announcement that it had been hacked by Russian agents. Within the indictment, it is implied that Stone knew about the committee being hacked; however, the document does not allege that Stone conspired with anyone, but instead claims that Stone's goal was to discover how the stolen material would be made public. This detail is important because simply attempting to discover how this material would be publicized would not constitute a crime. Following Stone's arrest, he appeared in federal court in Fort Lauderdale, during which the judge commanded his release on a \$250,000 bond.

Along with Stone's indictment, the recent investigation led by the special counsel has resulted in charges against thirty-four people in addition to guilty pleas from six Trump associates and advisers. None of those charges have contained direct allegations that Trump associates schemed with Russia in an attempt to interfere with the election.



Source: vox.com