

From: Steve Bannon <[REDACTED]>

To: "jeevacation@gmail.com" <jeevacation@gmail.com>

Subject: Fwd: ABC News: Michael Cohen expected to plead guilty to lying to Congress in collusion probe; gave 70 hours of testimony to special counsel: Sources

Date: Thu, 29 Nov 2018 14:42:07 +0000

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jason Miller <[REDACTED]>

Date: November 29, 2018 at 9:16:33 AM EST

To: Steve Bannon <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Fwd: ABC News: Michael Cohen expected to plead guilty to lying to Congress in collusion probe; gave 70 hours of testimony to special counsel: Sources

Zoinks!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Comms Alert <CommsAlert@gop.com>

Date: November 29, 2018 at 9:11:12 AM EST

To: undisclosed-recipients;

Subject: ABC News: Michael Cohen expected to plead guilty to lying to Congress in collusion probe; gave 70 hours of testimony to special counsel: Sources

Michael Cohen expected to plead guilty to lying to Congress in collusion probe; gave 70 hours of testimony to special counsel: Sources

ABC News

George Stephanopoulos, Eliana Larramendia & James Hill

November 29, 2018 – 9:05 AM

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/michael-cohen-expected-plead-guilty-lying-congress-collusion/story?id=59491450>

Special counsel Robert Mueller has reached a tentative deal with Michael Cohen, the former personal attorney and long-time fixer for President [Donald Trump](#), sources told ABC News.

Cohen is scheduled to appear in federal court in Manhattan on Thursday where he is expected to enter a guilty plea for misstatements to Congress in closed-door testimony last year about his contacts with Russians during the presidential campaign.

Once among the president's most loyal and zealous defenders in business and politics, Cohen has now promised to "put family and country first" by cooperating with prosecutors, becoming perhaps the most pivotal public witness against his former boss.

Cohen's earlier plea deal with federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York implicated President Trump in campaign finance felonies. Since then, Cohen has spent more than 70 hours in interviews with Mueller's team. The

questioning has focused on contacts with Russians by Trump associates during the campaign, Trump's business ties to Russia, obstruction of justice and talk of possible pardons, sources familiar with the discussions [have told ABC News](#).

"The potential significance of Cohen's cooperation is immense," said Kendall Coffey, a former United States Attorney in Florida.

As Trump's personal attorney and problem solver for more than a decade, Cohen's portfolio at the Trump Organization covered personal and business matters both routine and highly sensitive. His dealings while serving as a senior executive in Trump's global empire include several projects thought to be of interest to Mueller's prosecutors, most notably the pursuit of a Trump Tower project in Moscow during the presidential campaign.

"It cannot be determined if Cohen's cooperation will lead to other criminal allegations," Coffey said. "But for most high-powered business people with complex business interests, having one's personal attorney become a star witness for the prosecution is the worst possible legal nightmare."

Cohen once said that he would "take a bullet" for the president but has now come to regard Trump as dangerously unfit for the presidency, according to people close to Cohen.

He has been determined to tell Mueller's team, other federal prosecutors and the New York State Attorney General's Office all that he knows -- and his testimony poses a potentially serious threat to the president, sources told ABC News. They also say Cohen's voluntary cooperation has been crucial to the special counsel's case.

The news of the agreement comes during a tumultuous week in the Mueller investigation. On Monday, the special counsel's plea deal with Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort officially collapsed, with prosecutors alleging that Manafort breached the pact by lying to federal agents and government lawyers during interviews. Manafort's attorneys dispute the allegations that he lied.

And the president this week has been ratcheting up his criticisms of the investigation and Mueller's team, accusing the prosecutors in a Wednesday tweet of "viciously telling witnesses to lie about facts" and likening the inquiry to the dark period in American history when Republican U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy sought to expose alleged communist sympathizers in the 1950s.

Sources familiar with the special counsel's proposed agreement with Cohen told ABC News that the 52-year-old New Yorker will admit to making multiple misstatements to two congressional intelligence committees investigating alleged collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election. It was not immediately clear what Cohen told the congressional committees in the fall of 2017 that he will now say was false.

Though much remains unknown about the scope of the investigation, Mueller is reportedly at work on preparing his final report and Washington is bracing for the potential of another round of indictments now that the midterm elections have passed.

Cohen's anticipated agreement with Mueller also comes just two weeks before he is due to be sentenced in a separate case in federal court in New York, which burst into public view in April when federal agents raided his law office and residences.

Cohen pleaded guilty in August to six felonies associated with his personal business dealings - including tax evasion and making false statements to a bank - and two felony campaign finance violations in connection with his role in arranging non-disclosure agreements during the campaign with two women who had claimed past affairs with Trump.

During a plea hearing in that case, Cohen directly implicated President Trump in the alleged schemes to silence the women: adult film star Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal. Cohen told the court that he made the arrangements for those hush-money deals "in coordination with and at the direction of a candidate for federal office," referring to then-candidate Trump, "for the principal purpose of influencing the election."

Trump has denied the allegations of the affairs and has said that he learned of the deals only after they were made. The president's attorney, former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, who once called Cohen an "honest, honorable lawyer," said after the plea hearing that Cohen's actions "reflect a pattern of lies and dishonesty over a significant period of time."

Cohen remains free on bond in advance of a sentencing hearing scheduled for Dec. 12. He is facing a possible term of 46 to 63 months in prison and a potential fine of up to \$1 million.

Cohen's voluntary cooperation with Mueller could earn him significant credit with the special counsel in advance of his sentencing date in the New York case.

"If Cohen cooperates and provides substantial assistance, he could still receive a recommendation from the government for a reduced sentence even though it was not part of the original plea agreement," said Barbara McQuade, a University of Michigan law professor and a former federal prosecutor.

Since entering his guilty pleas in Manhattan, Cohen has been talking with multiple agencies investigating the president, source said. He is doing so voluntarily, without the protection of a formal cooperation agreement or the specific promise of a reduced sentence.

"His cooperation has already created the most serious federal allegations to date concerning President Trump, and more may be coming," Coffey said.

Cohen's interviews with Mueller's team have also been attended in part by federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York and by lawyers from the office of the New York State Attorney General, who are investigating the Trump family's charitable organization.

"Cohen is potentially a very significant cooperator in light of his close relationship with Trump," McQuade said.

Cohen has confirmed he attended a lunch meeting with a Ukrainian politician one week after Trump took office, where the two men discussed the potential for Cohen to share with his contacts at the White House a Ukraine peace proposal reportedly favored by Russia. Cohen also played an integral role in discussions about a possible Trump Tower in Moscow – negotiations that were going on at least through the early stages of the 2016 presidential campaign.

"Cohen's credibility could be subject to significant cross-examination because of his long history of defending Trump. But if Mueller can corroborate Cohen's testimony with documents, recordings or other witness testimony, then it could be very valuable," McQuade said.

Cohen's expected admission to making misstatements to Congress and his cooperation with investigators coincide with his very public transition over the past several months from the staunch Trump loyalist who protected the president and his family to a possible key witness against the president on multiple fronts.

Cohen clearly signaled his intentions to abandon his long-standing fealty to Trump, telling ABC News in a June interview that "my wife, my daughter and my son have my first loyalty and always will. I put family and country first," he said.

His guilty plea set to be entered Thursday centers around his testimony to Congress in the fall of 2017, at a time when Cohen was still firmly in the president's camp, sources said.

In a public statement released in September 2017 - in advance of his closed sessions on Capitol Hill - Cohen said that he "had nothing to do with any Russian involvement in our electoral process," and said he "never saw anything – not a hint of anything – that demonstrated [President Trump's] involvement in Russian interference in our election or any form of Russian collusion."

He said that the raw intelligence reports that made up the now infamous Steele Dossier, which asserted that Cohen had a key role in a secretive Trump campaign connection with Kremlin operatives, were "riddled with total falsehoods and intentionally salacious allegations."

Cohen also claimed in the statement that the proposal he worked on during the campaign to build a Trump property in Moscow "was solely a real estate deal and nothing more." The plan was terminated in January of 2016, Cohen said, after it was determined that the project was not viable for business reasons.

Under federal law, it is a crime to knowingly and willfully make materially false statements to Congress or to any branch of the federal government in connection with matters under investigation. Violators can be punished with a fine and up to five years in prison.