

## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Recording grand jury proceedings

Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

Starting in July, district attorneys in all 36 Oregon counties will be charged with making sure that most grand jury proceedings are recorded. Those recordings will be available, not to the general public, but to defendants whose lawyers will be able to use them in court. That's good news.

For now, only Deschutes, Jackson and Multnomah counties are recording grand jury proceedings, and district attorneys report few problems with the process. Implementing the new system hasn't been a hassle.

During grand jury hearings, prosecutors bring in witnesses to testify before jurors behind closed doors. If five out of seven jurors find probable cause, the case moves forward with an indictment.

The alternative is a preliminary hearing. In that case, defense attorneys also get involved, but it's a judge who rules on probable cause.

Some district attorneys worried a new recording requirement would force more cases to preliminary hearings. That hasn't happened. In fact, neither district attorney in Deschutes or Jackson counties has sent cases to a preliminary hearing, and Multnomah County dropped the practice in September, according to Willamette Week.

Perhaps best, at least from a public standpoint, recording proceedings and giving them to defense lawyers may make negotiating outcomes simpler, which in turn can save money. The process allows defendants and their lawyers to judge how strong a district attorney's case is.

Oregon is one of only a dozen states that until now did not require grand jury recordings. There were fears, particularly from some district attorneys and victims' rights advocates, that the change would be expensive and damaging to victims. The change has cost money, but it doesn't appear victims have suffered under the system.

Money for expansion of the system is included in the state Judicial Department's budget. Lawmakers must see that it stays there.

## Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

**Mail:** To the Editor, Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814  
**Email:** news@bakercityherald.com  
**Fax:** 541-523-6426



## Your views

### County should drop effort to open gates on road

Do I think the Lookout Mountain road is a RS 2477 county road? No. I believe the lower 4 to 5 miles of road up Connor Creek is a county road. The county did not give written notice in 2002 to the Forseas and Humphreys (previous land-owners) that the county was claiming that the road, a RS 2477 road, giving the county claim to the road through private property. I believe that if it wasn't for Forseas and Humphreys logging in the 1960s, '70s, '80s and '90s, building the road on their own private property, there wouldn't be a road. I believe the county claiming the road as a RS 2477 road is a government taking of private property.

Bill Harvey, county commissioner, said

to the present landowner that it was OK to put a locked gate across the road if the owner would leave the high Lookout Mountain road open, but after a few months Harvey changed his mind. He said the owner had to unlock the gate for public access to the Connor Creek road and Forsea property. There is already access to the Forsea property up Connor Creek. There is no need to come in through the locked gates. What good is Harvey's word?

I am one of the owners of the Forsea property and I believe the county is wrong in pursuing this RS 2477 road. The county should have better use of their time and taxpayer money. Making use of that money on the roads they already have. There's already plenty of

access for fire control and hunting on the Forsea property and BLM. BLM has an easement through the locked gates in case of fire.

I personally like the gates locked. It has cut down on traffic and the road is staying in better shape. If the county finally gets the owner to unlock those gates and the roads get tore up, I may stop allowing hunting on the Forsea property. I'm not too sure the county would be very popular with hunters if this happens.

The county should drop this and move on to more productive things.

**Dan Forsea**  
Richland

# Stone charges: Questions remain

By Jon Healey  
Los Angeles Times

One of the enduring lessons of Richard Nixon's fall from power is that the cover-up is easier to prove than the crime.

That lesson may have been lost on Roger Stone, a longtime Republican political operative who got his start playing dirty political tricks in Nixon's 1972 campaign. Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III obtained a seven-count indictment Thursday against Stone for allegedly seeking to cover up his efforts to obtain damaging information about Hillary Clinton from Wikileaks in 2016 to advance Trump's candidacy.

The indictment is crystal clear when it comes to Stone's alleged lies to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and his alleged attempt to bully another witness — unnamed in the indictment, but identified by The Times' Chris Megerian as radio host Randy Credico — into deceiving the committee. What's not so clear is whether Stone's efforts made an iota of difference to the Trump campaign.

Trump's defenders keep asking, "Where's the beef?" — err, "Where's the collusion?" The Stone indictment provides little of substance on that front, just more fuel for speculation.

Here are a few data points that U.S. investigators have already established. Hackers affiliated with Russian intelligence services are believed to have been responsible for two data breaches in 2016 that damaged the Clinton

campaign: one targeting the Democratic National Committee, and another that hoovered up emails to and from Clinton's campaign manager, John Podesta. The DNC's hacked emails were made widely available by Wikileaks in July 2016, and Podesta's in October 2016.

It's still a bit of a mystery how Wikileaks got the emails. The Stone indictment offers nothing on that point. It only suggests that Stone may have known about the first Wikileaks email dump before it became public, and that his insights into Wikileaks (referred to in the indictment as "Organization 1") were subsequently sought by the Trump campaign:

"By in or around June and July 2016, Stone informed senior Trump Campaign officials that he had information indicating Organization 1 had documents whose release would be damaging to the Clinton Campaign ... After the July 22, 2016, release of stolen DNC emails by Organization 1, a senior Trump Campaign official was directed to contact Stone about any additional releases and what other damaging information Organization 1 had regarding the Clinton Campaign. Stone thereafter told the Trump Campaign about potential future releases of damaging material by Organization 1."

But what, exactly, did Stone know? How did he know it? And how did that help the Trump campaign?

The indictment doesn't offer much grist for those mills. It portrays Stone as operating on the fringe of the Trump

campaign, having trouble getting his calls returned by a top campaign official. It also suggests that he lied when he publicly claimed to have been briefed directly by Wikileaks' leader Julian Assange; Stone appears to have relied on conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi and Credico for all his information about Wikileaks. And the only useful tip Stone is accused of providing the campaign is advance knowledge that Wikileaks would make another Clinton-related data dump in October.

Perhaps that's why Stone, whose official role as a Trump campaign adviser ended acrimoniously in 2015, had trouble getting his calls returned.

One of the more tantalizing allegations in the indictment is that Stone worked through Credico to ask Assange for any hacked emails he might have from Clinton herself or the State Department that could confirm an unspecified accusation about Clinton's work as Secretary of State. While the indictment asserts that Assange got the request, there's no indication that anything came of it.

That's the indictment in a nutshell. Stone comes across as someone who talked a good game about his insights into what Wikileaks had obtained and what it planned, then allegedly lied to Congress about what he'd done and said. But Mueller's team hasn't offered much about what Stone actually knew and how he knew it, which seem like the most consequential questions.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Donald Trump:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

**U.S. Rep. Greg Walden** (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.

**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; www.governor.oregon.gov.

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Reed:** oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

**Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

**State Sen. Cliff Bentz** (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.

**State Rep. Lynn Findley** (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep. LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe, Lynette Perrv, Arvid Andersen, Ken Gross and Doni Bruland.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; John Clark, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

**Baker County departments:** 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Jeff Smith, roadmaster; Matt Shirtcliff, district attorney; Alice Durlinger, county treasurer; Cindy Carpenter, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

**Baker School District:** 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., Council Chambers, Baker City Hall, 1655 First St.; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Huntington.