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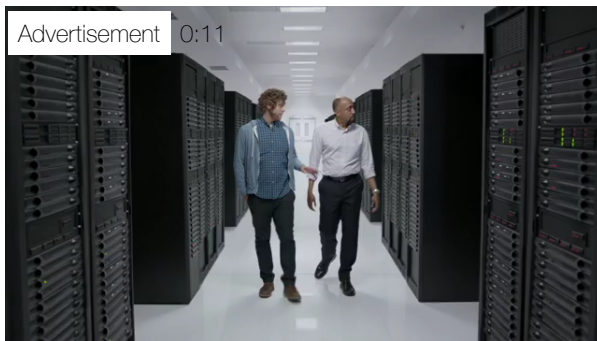
Mueller Reveals Basis for Manafort Probe to Skeptical Judge

By David Voreacos

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- ▶ Virginia judge weighing Manafort request to dismiss indictment
 - ▶ Prosecutors had earlier redacted three-page Rosenstein memo
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Special Counsel Robert Mueller gave a judge the complete three-page memo that the prosecutor overseeing the Russia investigation wrote to justify the probe of Paul Manafort,

chairman of the Donald Trump

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presidential campaign.

U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III ordered Mueller's prosecutors to provide him an unredacted version of the memo that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein wrote on Aug. 2, 2017, about why Manafort was a target of the special counsel.

Ellis made the demand at a May 4 court hearing in Alexandria, Virginia, to consider Manafort's argument that Mueller overstepped his appointment authority, and the indictment should be dismissed.

After Justice Department attorney Michael Dreeben argued at the hearing that the redacted version offered the relevant paragraphs about Manafort, Ellis said: "I'll be the judge of whether it relates to the others."

Manafort is charged with tax and bank fraud in Virginia, where he faces a July trial. He is charged separately in Washington with money laundering and working as an unregistered agent for Ukraine.

At the hearing, Ellis sharply questioned the motives of prosecutors. "You don't really care about Mr. Manafort's bank fraud," Ellis said, adding: "You really care about what information Mr. Manafort can give you that would reflect on Mr. Trump or lead to his prosecution or impeachment or whatever." In a speech that day after the hearing, Trump

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praised the judge's remarks and expressed sympathy for Manafort.

Prosecutors filed the full memo under seal and directly to the judge through the classified security officer. Such a designation suggests it involves national security information.

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