Meet the Mueller team

By Marshall Cohen, Tal Yellin, Caroline Kelly and Liz Stark

Special counsel Robert Mueller assembled a team of lawyers for his investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election and potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. The investigation has already led to charges against 35 people and entities, including four associates of President Donald Trump. Mueller brought on private-sector attorneys and prosecutors from the Department of Justice. Here are biographies of the 15 lawyers known to be currently working on Mueller’s team.

See the team

Zainab Ahmad

An expert in prosecuting terrorism and organized crime, Zainab Ahmad previously served as an assistant US attorney for the Eastern District of New York. She joined Mueller’s team in the summer of 2017.

Role on Mueller team:
Ahmad has worked on the case of former national security adviser Michael Flynn: She was one of two prosecutors who signed Flynn’s charging documents and was also in court for Flynn’s guilty plea in December 2017.

Notable cases:
Ahmad successfully prosecuted al-Qaeda terrorist Najibullah Zazi, who pleaded guilty in 2010 to terrorism charges relating to a plot to bomb the New York City subways on the 9/11 anniversary.

In 2017, Ahmad co-led the prosecution of Muhanad Mahmoud Al Farekh, an American citizen who was convicted on nine counts related to an al-Qaeda plan to attack US troops in Afghanistan.

Greg Andres
Greg Andres is a white-collar criminal defense lawyer who specializes in fraud and foreign bribery. He served as a deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, and was involved in the successful prosecution of an $8 billion Ponzi scheme. Most recently, Andres worked as a corporate lawyer at the law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell.

Role on Mueller team:
On the Mueller team, he jointly led the case against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates. In October 2017, Manafort and Gates were charged with financial crimes unrelated to the 2016 presidential campaign. Gates pleaded guilty in February 2018. Andres led the successful prosecution of Manafort in Virginia, where he was convicted on eight counts of financial crimes. Manafort later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington and agreed to cooperate with investigators.

Notable cases:
Andres was involved in the prosecution of Robert Allen Stanford in an $8 billion Ponzi scheme case. Stanford was convicted in 2012 on 13 counts, including mail fraud, money laundering and conspiracy.

While in the US attorney’s office in Brooklyn, Andres led a mafia investigation that convicted dozens of mob associates. In those situations, the prosecutors attempted to pressure witnesses into cooperation — also known as “flipping.” Leaders of the Bonanno organized crime family in New York even hatched a plan to kill him, though they never carried it out, according to court documents.

Rush Atkinson
Before joining Mueller’s team, trial attorney Rush Atkinson worked for the Criminal Division Securities and Financial Fraud Unit at the Justice Department, where he worked under Andrew Weissmann, who is also now on Mueller’s team. Atkinson previously worked in the Justice Department’s National Security Division, which specializes in counterterrorism and foreign intelligence surveillance cases.

Role on Mueller team:
Atkinson has been involved in the case against 13 Russian nationals and 3 Russian entities for allegedly meddling in the 2016 election by using social media to spread divisive political messages.
Pinedo, who pleaded guilty to selling fake online identities to Russians.

Notable cases:
Atkinson was involved with the indictment of a former vice president of finance for Bankrate, Inc. The former bank official was charged with wire fraud, securities fraud and other financial crimes.

Atkinson also helped with the prosecution of a mother and son charged with orchestrating a $16 million Medicare fraud scheme in Miami.

Ryan Dickey

No longer working for Mueller as of August 31, 2018

Ryan Dickey was previously an assistant US attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia and also worked in the Justice Department’s Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section. He specializes in cyber-related prosecutions and was added to Mueller’s team in late 2017.

Role on Mueller team:
Dickey has been involved in the case against 13 Russian nationals and 3 Russian entities for allegedly meddling in the 2016 election by using social media to spread divisive political messages. He has also worked on the case against 12 Russian intelligence officers accused of hacking Democratic targets during the 2016 election. Dickey also worked on the case against Richard Pinedo, who pleaded guilty to selling fake online identities to Russians.

Notable cases:
Dickey was involved in the sprawling case against Megaupload, the online file sharing website that the Justice Department described as an “international organized criminal enterprise” that perpetrated “massive online piracy.” Dickey helped secure a guilty plea from an Estonian programmer involved in the case.

He was senior counsel in the case against the hacker known as Guccifer, a Romanian national who hacked the accounts of prominent Americans and was sentenced to prison in 2016. (Guccifer is unrelated to Guccifer 2.0, the online persona used by Russian intelligence operatives during the 2016 presidential election that claimed credit for hacking the Democratic National Committee.)

Michael Dreeben

Michael Dreeben is a deputy solicitor general at the Justice Department. He has argued more than 100 cases before the Supreme Court throughout his extensive legal career. Dreeben is considered to be one of Mueller’s most significant hires because of his expertise in criminal law and appellate advocacy.

Role on Mueller team:
In February 2018, a federal judge weighing whether to release the Comey memos revealed that Dreeben had secretly provided testimony to the court about Mueller’s investigation. Dreeben has also been involved with the case against 13 Russian nationals and 3 Russian entities accused of
Notable cases:

Dreeben argued his first Supreme Court case in 1989 against a young lawyer named John Roberts, who would later become chief justice. Since then, Dreeben has appeared before the high court more than 100 times, representing the US government in cases ranging from privacy issues to insider trading.

Dreeben made an unrelated first Supreme Court appearance since joining the Mueller team on detail. He argued on behalf of the US government in a Fourth Amendment cell phone privacy case in November 2017.

Kyle Freeny

No longer working for Mueller, will leave the office in mid-October, 2018

Prior to joining the Mueller investigation, Kyle Freeny was a Justice Department prosecutor for the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative, which focuses on foreign corruption and money laundering.

Role on Mueller team:

Freeny was involved with the cases against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates, appearing in court alongside her special counsel colleagues. Gates pleaded guilty in February 2018. Manafort was convicted on eight counts of financial crimes by a jury in Virginia and later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington. Freeny has also worked on the case against 12 Russian intelligence officers accused of hacking Democratic targets during the 2016 election.

Notable cases:

Freeny was involved with the prosecution of a civil forfeiture case against the production company behind "The Wolf of Wall Street," which was allegedly funded with laundered money from the Malaysian government. The Justice Department said the case led to the largest single action ever brought under the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative.

Freeny also defended the federal government in 2014 when 26 states filed a lawsuit challenging President Barack Obama’s executive orders on immigration, according to court filings.

Andrew Goldstein

Andrew Goldstein led the public corruption unit in the US attorney’s office in Manhattan. He worked under former US Attorney Preet Bharara, who was fired by Trump in March after he refused to resign.

Role on Mueller team:

Goldstein, with special counsel colleagues Jeannie Rhee and Aaron Zelinsky, was involved in handling the case of former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos. In October 2017, it
**Notable cases:**
Goldstein was part of the team that secured a 2015 corruption conviction of Sheldon Silver, the former Democratic speaker of the New York State Assembly. (Silver’s conviction was overturned by a federal appeals court in July 2017, which ruled that there was an issue with the judge’s instructions to the jury.)

Goldstein also successfully prosecuted three men associated with a New York City municipal fraud and kickback scheme project called CityTime. The investigation examined more than 150 bank accounts, hundreds of thousands of documents and more than 100 witnesses, according to the Justice Department.

---

**Adam Jed**

Adam Jed, an appellate attorney, joined the Mueller team on detail from the Justice Department’s Civil Division. He received the Attorney General’s Award for Exceptional Service in 2014.

**Role on Mueller team:**
Jed worked on the cases against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates case, though he has not participated in court hearings. Gates pleaded guilty in February 2018. Manafort was convicted on eight counts of financial crimes by a jury in Virginia and later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington.

**Notable cases:**
Jed has worked on several high-profile Supreme Court cases during the Obama administration, including United States v. Windsor, which overturned the Defense of Marriage Act.

Jed also defended the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate in the Little Sisters of the Poor v. Sebelius case. The Supreme Court sent the case back to a lower court in 2016, punting on the issue.

---

**Scott Meisler**

Scott Meisler was an appellate lawyer in the Justice Department’s Criminal Division for several years before joining the Mueller team in the summer of 2017. He specializes in surveillance and fraud cases.

**Role on Mueller team:**
Meisler worked on the cases against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates case. Gates pleaded guilty in February 2018. Manafort was convicted on eight counts of financial crimes by a jury in Virginia and later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington.

**Notable cases:**
In 2012, Meisler won a Justice Department Criminal Division award for “Outstanding Contributions by a New Employee” for winning an en banc decision from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in an
Robert Mueller

Earlier in his life, Mueller served as a decorated Marine in the Vietnam War. He later spent 12 years working in US attorney’s offices, including prominent roles leading the offices in San Francisco and Boston.

Mueller took over as FBI director just days before the September 11th attacks. He served until September 2013, making him the second-longest FBI director in US history, behind J. Edgar Hoover.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, a Trump appointee, named Mueller special counsel in May 2017. He authorized Mueller to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 election, any links between Trump associates and Russia and “any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation.”

His appointment earned praise from Democrats and Republicans, who called him a man of integrity. Trump and many of his GOP allies have since ratcheted up criticism of Mueller and his entire investigation.

RELATED: Robert Mueller and his pursuit of justice

Elizabeth Prelogar

Elizabeth Prelogar joined Mueller’s team from the solicitor general’s office, where she argued cases as an appellate attorney. She previously clerked for Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagan. She speaks fluent Russian and has previously studied Russian censorship laws.

Role on Mueller team:
Prelogar was involved with the case against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, though she has not appeared in court hearings. Manafort was found guilty on eight counts of financial crimes by a jury in Virginia and later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington.

Notable cases:
Prelogar argued on behalf of the federal government in a case that questioned whether uncounseled, misdemeanor convictions heard in Indian tribal court could be used as part of domestic violence cases heard in federal court. The case was decided unanimously in favor of the United States.

Prelogar also worked on Carpenter v. United States, a case pending before the Supreme Court that questions whether the government’s acquisition of cellphone records from cellphone providers violates the individual customer’s Fourth Amendment rights.
James Quarles

James Quarles was a young assistant special prosecutor on the Watergate Special Prosecution Force in the mid-1970s. He then joined the Boston-based law firm Hale and Dorr and led its Washington office while specializing in intellectual property litigation. That law firm merged with an old-line DC partnership — Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering — and Quarles joined its executive committee. Mueller also worked at that firm, known as WilmerHale, and he brought Quarles along after he was appointed special counsel.

**Role on Mueller team:**

Quarles has been assigned to matters relating to Trump.

**Notable cases:**

Quarles’ former clients as a private attorney include Apple, the NFL and Volkswagen, for which he worked alongside Mueller to oversee hundreds of settlements brought against the car maker regarding its diesel emissions, according to a federal ethics disclosure.

Jeannie Rhee

Rhee, a white-collar crime specialist focusing on government investigations, left the private firm WilmerHale to join Mueller’s team. During the Obama administration, she served as a deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel, which can weigh some of the thorniest legal questions for the executive branch.

**Role on Mueller team:**

Rhee has been involved in the case against 13 Russian nationals and 3 Russian entities for allegedly meddling in the 2016 election by using social media to spread divisive political messages, as well as the case against 12 Russian intelligence officers accused of hacking Democratic targets during the 2016 election. Rhee also worked on former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos’ guilty plea, for lying to the FBI. She is also involved with a court battle against an associate of Trump ally Roger Stone who is challenging Mueller’s authority, and also joined her special counsel colleagues in the case against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort. Rhee also worked on the case against Richard Pinedo, who pleaded guilty to selling fake online identities to Russians.

**Notable cases:**

Rhee has tried over 30 cases for the Department of Justice. During the Obama administration, she advised the White House and attorney general on criminal law, executive privilege and other legal matters, according to her biography on the Council of Korean Americans website.

Rhee represented Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in a lawsuit about her private emails, and she also represented the Clinton Foundation in a civil racketeering case that was later dismissed.

Rhee also represented President Barack Obama’s deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes during the House Benghazi Committee’s investigation into the deadly 2012 terrorist attack in Libya.
Brian Richardson clerked for Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer during the October 2016 term, before joining Mueller’s team in July 2017. A graduate of Yale Law School, Richardson previously worked for judges in the US district court in Brooklyn and the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals, according to Above the Law.

**Role on Mueller team:**
Richardson appeared in court alongside special counsel colleagues Andrew Weissmann, Greg Andres and Kyle Freeny for the plea hearing of Dutch lawyer Alex van der Zwaan in February 2018. Van der Zwaan pleaded guilty to lying to investigators about his discussions with former Trump campaign aide Rick Gates.

---

**Brandon Van Grack**

**In October 2018 it was reported he recently left the Mueller team**

Brandon Van Grack served in the Justice Department’s National Security Division. He prosecuted counter-espionage cases in the department’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

**Role on Mueller team:**
Van Grack is one of the lawyers on Mueller’s team that handled the investigation and guilty plea of Trump’s former national security adviser Michael Flynn. He is overseeing Flynn’s case in court. Van Grack was also one of the lead prosecutors in the case against former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort in Virginia, where he was found guilty on eight counts of financial crimes. Manafort later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington.

**Notable cases:**
Van Grack has been involved in several high-profile cyber and counter-terrorism cases, including the prosecution of a Kosovo hacker who gave personal information of US service members to ISIS. The hacker, Ardit Ferizi, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, according to a DOJ press release.

Van Grack also helped prosecute a US government employee who took home classified documents that contained national defense information. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency employee Mohan L. Nirala was found guilty after federal agents made a forced entry into his home and discovered over 500 pages of classified documents in his basement, according to a DOJ press release.

---

**Andrew Weissmann**

Andrew Weissmann was one of Mueller’s first hires, leaving his Justice Department role as chief of the Criminal Division Fraud Section. The two men have worked together for several years at the FBI - Weissman was Mueller’s special counsel in 2005, and the bureau’s general counsel in 2011. He’s known for his aggressive approach to white collar cases.

**Role on Mueller team:**
counts of financial crimes by a jury in Virginia. He later pleaded guilty to more charges in Washington and agreed to cooperate with investigators.

**Notable cases:**
Weissmann famously led the Justice Department’s Enron Task Force in the early 2000s, where he investigated over 30 members of the company’s upper echelon. One of Weissmann’s more memorable tactics included charging the spouse of Enron’s chief financial officer Andrew Fastow. The approach led to guilty pleas from both Fastows, and the former business leader’s cooperation in the investigation.

Weissmann was responsible for trying more than 25 cases and prosecuting several members of the Genovese, Colombo and Gambino crime families in the Brooklyn US attorney’s office, according to a DOJ press release.

Weissmann was also involved in a cooperation agreement signed between the US government and Felix Sater in 1998, according to court filings. Sater, who did business with President Donald Trump in the 2000s, would later become an FBI informant who helped the government pursue organized crime figures. His activities during the campaign attracted the scrutiny of investigators on the House Intelligence Committee. He testified before the panel in December 2017.

---

**Aaron Zebley**

Aaron Zebley previously served as Mueller’s chief of staff at the FBI. Zebley also worked as the senior counselor in the National Security Division at the Justice Department and as a special agent in the FBI’s Counter Terrorism Division. He joined WilmerHale shortly after Mueller and left when Mueller was appointed special counsel.

**Notable cases:**
Zebley was part of the FBI team that investigated the September 11th attacks. He was involved in the trial of al-Qaeda operative Zacarias Moussaoui, who was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Zebley also played a role in tracking down terrorists behind the twin US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

More recently, Zebley once represented former Clinton aide Justin Cooper, who helped manage her private server.

---

**Aaron Zelinsky**

Aaron Zelinsky joined the Mueller team on detail from the US attorney’s office in Maryland. Zelinsky served as an assistant US attorney under Rod Rosenstein, who is now the deputy attorney general and oversees Mueller’s appointment.

**Role on Mueller team:**
Roger Stone who is challenging Mueller's authority.

**Notable cases:**

As part of his role as a prosecutor in Maryland, Zelinsky was involved in prosecuting cases of felon gun ownership, health care fraud conspiracy, and food stamp fraud and wire fraud.

In 2016, Zelinsky was recognized by the Justice Department for excellence in prosecuting organized criminal activity.

Correction: This interactive has been updated to accurately describe Jeannie Rhee's time at the Justice Department.

Clarification: This interactive was updated to more clearly describe Kyle Freeny's case history.

Katelyn Polantz contributed to this report. Illustrations by Max Pepper; Published February 23, 2018; Updated October 5, 2018