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FOX NEWS FIRST: Exclusive - Trump defends Acting AG Whitaker, says no to Mueller sit-down interview



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Developing now, Monday, Nov. 19, 2018

- **President Trump, in an exclusive interview with FOX News' Chris Wallace, addressed controversies surrounding his acting attorney general and the Robert Mueller probe, potential upcoming changes in his administration, his war of words with CNN correspondent Jim Acosta and more**
- **Trump told FOX it wasn't necessary for him to hear the tape of the purported killing of activist Jamal Khashoggi and that the Saudi Crown**

prince had repeatedly denied involvement in the slaying

- . Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson conceded Florida's hard-fought U.S. Senate race to Republican Gov. Rick Scott on Sunday after machine and manual recounts had Scott ahead by approximately 10,000 votes**
- . Embattled Florida election official Brenda Snipes reportedly has submitted her resignation**
- . The death toll of California's devastating wildfires has risen to at least 77, while the number of people unaccounted for has dropped to 1,000. Authorities are concerned rain could hinder the search for more victims**

THE LEAD STORY - EXCLUSIVE: TRUMP ON WHITAKER, MUELLER PROBE, CNN'S ACCOSTA - [President Trump, speaking Fox News' Chris Wallace in an exclusive, wide-ranging interview](#), defended Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker against Democrats' calls for his recusal in Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, and said that he probably would not sit down for an interview with Mueller ... The president said he was unaware that Whitaker previously had been critical of Mueller's probe and had written in 2017 that it was at

risk of becoming a "political fishing expedition." Trump added that he "would not get involved" in Whitaker's decisions as he oversees Mueller's probe in his new role as head of the Justice Department and was confident Whitaker is "going to do what's right." The president added that he has personally responded to Mueller's written questions in the Russia probe and that they would be submitted "very soon." Trump said his team is "writing what I tell them to write" in response to the inquiries.

Trump emphasized, however, that he probably would not sit for an in-person interview with Mueller, amid fears voiced by his attorneys that he could be tricked into a so-called "perjury trap."

The president also addressed several other topics, including:

- His war of words with CNN White House correspondent Jim Acosta: "If he misbehaves, we'll throw him out or we'll stop the news conference."
- On rumored upcoming changes in his administration: Trump said Chief of Staff John Kelly "will want to move on" and suggested he is considering potential changes in "three or four or five positions."

[CLICK HERE to read the transcript](#) of President Trump's interview with Chris Wallace. - *Reported by Gregg Re (@gregg_re on Twitter)*

- Hans von Spakovsky: [Acting Attorney General Whitaker has no conflict of interest](#), no reason to recuse himself

TRUMP: 'NO REASON' TO HEAR KHASHOGGI TAPE: In his interview with FOX News, [President Trump said there was "no reason" for him to hear a tape recording purported to be of the killing of Saudi activist Jamal Khashoggi inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate last month ...](#) "We have the tape, I don't want to hear the tape, no reason for me to hear the tape," Trump said on "FOX News Sunday." When Chris Wallace asked why he did not want to hear the recording, Trump said: "Because it's a suffering tape, it's a terrible tape. I've been fully briefed on it. There's no reason for me to hear it."

On Saturday, Trump vowed that his administration would "be having a very full report over the next two days, probably Monday or Tuesday." It was unclear whether the document would be made public. The Washington Post and other outlets have reported that the CIA had concluded that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered Khashoggi's death. A U.S. government official told Fox News on Saturday

that no final assessment or conclusion relating to the crown prince's involvement had been reached, nor had a so-called "smoking gun" been found.

Trump told "FOX News Sunday" that the crown prince, known informally as "MbS," had told him "maybe five times" that he had no involvement in Khashoggi's death. When Wallace asked what Trump would do if he determines that the crown prince has lied to him, Trump said: "Will anybody really know?"- *Reported by Samuel Chamberlain (@SChamberlainFOX on Twitter)*

FLORIDA RECOUNT RESOLVED: [Florida's long-time Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson conceded to Republican challenger Gov. Rick Scott](#) on Sunday, drawing the hotly contested race to represent the Sunshine State to a close after 12 days of legal wrangling ... According to the Florida Secretary of State's office, Scott led Nelson by approximately 10,000 votes after the state's 67 counties completed machine and manual recounts Nelson, who served three terms in the U.S. Senate, met his match in Scott, who launched a competitive campaign for Florida votes. Scott, a two-term governor of the state, said Nelson called him to "graciously" concede and that Scott, in turn, thanked Nelson for his years of service. Scott has now won narrow victories in three statewide

racers since 2010. - *Reported by Barnini Chakraborty (@Barnini on Twitter)*

- [Florida Senator-elect Rick Scott](#): The votes are in -- now it's time to make Washington work
- Defeated Democrat Stacey Abrams [won't call Brian Kemp legitimate Georgia gov-elect](#)

REPORT: SNIPES OUT - Brenda Snipes, the much-criticized supervisor of elections in Florida's Broward County, [has submitted her resignation, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported](#) Sunday ... The paper reported that Snipes' resignation will take effect in January. Snipes was under fire for her handling of votes during this year's elections. Florida's contests for governor and U.S. Senate went to recounts, putting the political spotlight on the Sunshine State with an intensity not seen since the 2000 presidential election. - *Reported by Nicole Darrah (@nicoleदारrah on Twitter)*

- After dramatic recounts, [most Florida offices belong to Republicans](#)

RAIN A BLESSING AND CURSE FOR FIRE-RAVAGED CALIFORNIA: The [search for remains of victims of the devastating Northern California wildfire has taken on new urgency](#) as rain in the forecast could complicate those efforts while also

bringing relief to firefighters on the front lines

... Up to 400 people fanned out Sunday to search the ash and rubble where homes once stood before flames roared through the Sierra foothills town of Paradise and surrounding communities, killing at least 77 people in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century. Teams of volunteers and search and rescue crews poked through the smoky debris for fragments of bone before rains can wash them away or turn loose, dry ash into a thick paste. About 1,000 names remain on a list of people unaccounted for more than a week after the fire began. Authorities don't believe all those on the list are missing and the roster dropped by 300 on Sunday as more people were located or got in touch to say they weren't missing. - *Reported by the Associated Press*

AS SEEN ON FOX NEWS WEEKEND

KKK-ICE 'INSANITY'- "Who you gonna call, Ghostbusters? Was the con then or is the con now." — *Judge Jeanine Pirro, in her "Opening Statement" on "Justice with Judge Jeanine," blasting the comparison by U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., of ICE to the KKK and asking the senator how she intends to fulfill her promise to combat gangs and fight human trafficking without the agency.* [WATCH](#)

TRENDING

[Condoleezza Rice says she's 'not ready to coach'](#) Cleveland Browns.

Man suing British Airways for [sitting him next to overweight passenger](#) on 13-hour flight.

GRAPHIC PIC: Washington Redskins QB Alex Smith [suffers gruesome leg injury](#).

THE SWAMP

[Ocasio-Cortez lashes out again](#), says 'drooling' Republicans waiting to 'chop up' her 'word slips.'

[Sonia Sotomayor: Brett Kavanaugh is part](#) of Supreme Court 'family.'

['Master race' comment](#) by Kansas county commissioner draws calls for his resignation.

ACROSS THE NATION

[Migrant caravan faces opposition](#) from angry Tijuana residents.

After further review: Photo [proves Harvard running back didn't flip off](#) Yale defenders.

[Jayme Closs search](#) leads police to ask hunters to look out for possible clues for missing Wisconsin teen.

Why hasn't the [\\$1.5 billion Mega Millions winner](#) claimed the prize?

MINDING YOUR BUSINESS

[Earnings, turkey and retail](#) highlight the week ahead.

GOP must [block Democrats from reversing Trump's](#)

[business-friendly agenda](#): Liz Cheney.

Oil rises [on expected OPEC cuts](#).

[Apple CEO Tim Cook](#) sees tech regulations on the horizon.

[Michael Bloomberg donates \\$1.8B](#) to Johns Hopkins University.

Time to get a watch? [What to know about buying preowned](#).

Thanksgiving travel: [Three best airlines](#) for flying economy.

[Best and worst airports](#) in the U.S.

FOX NEWS OPINION

Mary Anne Marsh: Here's [how Trump will try to avoid impeachment](#).

Liz Peek: [Democrats are in disarray](#). Does that spell trouble for 2020?

Mitzi Perdue: How to avoid politics and [have a 'controversy-free' time this Thanksgiving](#).

HOLLYWOOD SQUARED

'Last Man Standing' star [Tim Allen mocks liberals 'small window of sense of humor.'](#)

[Mel B details attempted suicide](#) with 200 painkillers in new book excerpt.

[Rolling Stones' tongue-out logo](#) teases likely stops on band's next U.S. tour.

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS?

[First-ever Oregon dinosaur bone](#) found by scientists.

Argentine Navy submarine may have

'imploded'; [photos show wreckage on sea floor](#).

Arizona bird rescue searching for owner of mysterious bedazzled pigeon.

STAY TUNED

[FOX Nation is coming!](#) - Sign up now and find out more about its **exciting launch on Nov. 27!**

On Facebook:

Check out ['FOX News Update,' our new Facebook-exclusive news program!](#)

On FOX News:

[FOX & Friends](#), 6 a.m. ET: Special guests include: Florida Governor-elect Ron DeSantis; Florida Senator-elect Rick Scott. Lt. Col. Allen West sounds off on the migrant caravan. Willie Robertson talks his new book, "American Entrepreneur." An update on Trae Putnam, who got help with his medical expenses from "FOX & Friends" viewers.

[FOX News@Night](#), 11 p.m. ET: Special guests include: Former Acting ICE director Thomas Homan.

On FOX Business:

Mornings with Maria, 6 a.m. ET: Special guests include: John Hofmeister, former Shell Oil president; Lou Basenese, founder and chief analyst of Disruptive tech Research; U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas; Anthony Scaramucci, former White House communications director.

Varney & Co., 9 a.m. ET: Andy Puzder, former CEO of CKE Restaurants; Ed Lazear, former chairman of President George W. Bush's Council of Economic Advisers.; U.S. Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Fla.

Countdown to the Closing Bell with Liz Claman, 3 p.m. ET: Ambassador Rufus Yerxa, president of the National Foreign Trade Council.

On FOX News Radio:

The FOX News Rundown podcast: President Trump sat down with FOX News' Chris Wallace for an exclusive interview on "FOX News Sunday" where they discussed the aftermath of the midterms, relations with Saudi Arabia, and more. FOX News' Leland Vittert breaks down their conversation. The world was captivated earlier this year by the rescue of a boys soccer team stuck in cave in Thailand. Matt Gutman, who covered the rescue for ABC and wrote the book, "The Boys in the Cave: Deep Inside the Impossible Rescue in Thailand," discusses the heroics

behind the ordeal. Plus, commentary by FOX News contributor Lisa Boothe.

Want the FOX News Rundown sent straight to your mobile device? Subscribe through [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Play](#), and [Stitcher](#).

[The Brian Kilmeade Show](#), 9 a.m. ET: New York Post columnist [Michael Goodwin on how CNN's Jim Acosta abused his privileges](#) as a member of the press. Willie Robertson discusses his new book, "American Entrepreneur."

#OnThisDay

2007: Amazon.com releases its first Kindle e-book reader.

1990: The pop duo Milli Vanilli are stripped of their Grammy Award because, it was discovered, other singers had lent their voices to the "Girl You Know It's True" album.

1985: President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev meet for the first time as they begin their summit in Geneva.

FOX News First is compiled by FOX News' Bryan Robinson. Thank you for joining us! Enjoy your Monday! We'll see you in your inbox first thing Tuesday morning.