

Substantial Disruption



Cold Wet Gnosis

by Mike Tully

If James Comey, the recently fired FBI Director, doesn't have a dog, he should adopt one. There's a [well-known trope of undetermined origin](#) that states, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog!" While Comey is, by all accounts, a stand-up guy who [continues to be liked and respected](#) within the Bureau, he was friendless in the political community. Republicans didn't trust him because Barack Obama appointed him and Democrats were seething over a gratuitous rebuke on his part that may have cost them the White House. Donald Trump doesn't like him because he was being investigated by Comey and Trump desperately wants the investigation to end. When that many knives are unsheathed, the chances for survival are pretty much zero. Comey is now a private citizen. A dog would not care. A dog would be loyal, would love him unconditionally, would jump and wag enthusiastically when he saw him, would gaze at him adoringly and carefully sniff him up and down -- a dog's way of asking: "How was your day?"

Donald Trump doesn't own a dog. He has people for that.

People like Rod Rosenstein, a Deputy Attorney General who, at Trump's request, authored one of the [lamest firing memos](#) in history. (Full disclosure: I have conducted several hundred workplace investigations, followed by detailed findings, conclusions, and recommendations.) He focused on two items: Comey's July 5, 2016 announcement that no charges would be brought against Hillary Clinton for using a private email server – including the aforementioned “but she was naughty” rebuke – and his October 28, 2016 letter to Congress, that there might be classified emails on a laptop computer shared by the king of the laptop selfie, Anthony Weiner. He said Comey's actions "ran counter to guidance that I put in place four years ago," and cited seven former Justice Department officials as his only authorities. After noting that a decision to fire the FBI Director "should not be taken lightly," he wrote, “the FBI is unlikely to regain public and congressional trust until it has a Director who understands the gravity of the mistakes and pledges never to repeat them.” He concluded, “Having refused to admit his errors, the Director cannot be expected to implement the necessary corrective actions.” There is no evidence that Comey “refused to admit his errors” to Rosenstein or Trump. That comment refers to Comey's response to what Rosenstein characterized as “skeptical questions” from a Congressional committee. To recap: (1) The letter was confined to a pair of single examples, not the Director's overall performance; (2) Comey was accused of violating a “guidance” written by the author of the letter; (3) Rosenstein only cited the public comments of former Justice Department officials; (4) he also failed to cite any former FBI officials; (5) further, he failed to cite any laws, regulations, protocols or policies; and (6) Comey was never given the opportunity to explain his actions personally to Trump, nor to assure the President that he would not repeat them.

That latter omission violates former Google Executive Kim Scott's [guidance](#) for knowing when to fire a problem employee. "Make sure that you've communicated the problem clearly," she wrote. "If you have doubts about whether or not you've done so, then you probably haven't." Trump and his administration [have not communicated anything clearly](#), whether to Comey or Congress, resulting in a [media firestorm](#). "The tipping point comes," [wrote Allison Rimm and Celia Brown in the Harvard Business Review](#), "when the cost of keeping an employee is greater than the disruption of letting him or her go." Clearly, Trump's advisers didn't read that article. Frank Kalman, Managing Editor of *Talent Economy*, [wrote](#) that Comey's firing was "a stark example of how not to fire someone." Kalman found it "incredible" that Trump would not fire Comey personally, but in a memo delivered to his office – [when he wasn't even there](#). He called Trump's action "unprofessional and, dare I say, cowardly."

When Rosenstein wrote his amateurish memo he was doing his gutless Master's bidding. "Rod, come!" Trump told him [a day earlier](#). "*Sit, boy.*" "*Stay here while I teach you a new trick.*" If Rosenstein hesitated, Trump told him, "*Roll over and do what I say.*" When Rosenstein finally acquiesced, Trump told him, "Good boy. *Shake hands,*" then handed the leash to Jeff Sessions, who quietly led Rosenstein back to his kennel.

Comey was not a good dog when [Trump summoned him to dinner](#). "*Come in James,*" said Trump. "*Sit down and stay for dinner.*" Comey did so, but refused to *roll over* and pledge his loyalty. He would not *beg* for his job. Worst of all, he would not let go of his favorite chew toy: the investigation into Trump's Russian connections. Trump had no choice; it was time for a new forever home. But the President didn't kick Comey out personally. He has people for that.

The President sees himself as the biggest dog of all, but is he? Or is he, rather, a "[little barky dog that gets its way and makes a big noise?](#)" Unfortunately, [to quote Sam Houston](#), "He has every characteristic of a dog except loyalty," as he demonstrated by wagging his tail for those nice Russians and giving them [highly classified information](#). Trump is not a guard dog; he is a dog that needs to be guarded. Sit, Donald. Stay. Lie down. Roll over. Play dead.