

Trump blasts Cohen over tape disclosure

By Eli Watkins

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Washington (CNN) — President Donald Trump blasted his former attorney Michael Cohen on Wednesday, the morning after CNN [aired the audio](#) of a recording Cohen made of the two.

"What kind of a lawyer would tape a client? So sad! Is this a first, never heard of it before? Why was the tape so abruptly terminated (cut) while I was presumably saying positive things? I hear there are other clients and many reporters that are taped - can this be so? Too bad!" Trump tweeted.

In the audio aired first on CNN's "Cuomo Prime Time," Trump and Cohen can be heard discussing how they would buy the rights to former Playboy model Karen McDougal's story about an alleged affair she had with Trump years earlier, which Trump denies. Court filings said federal prosecutors have 12 recordings from Cohen, and CNN [previously confirmed](#) the recording with Trump is among those 12.

The tape's release marked a dramatic rupture in the relationship between the President and Cohen, previously a steadfast supporter in addition to working as Trump's personal attorney and longtime confidant. Cohen is [under criminal investigation](#) by the US attorney's office in Manhattan for his personal financial dealings, including the payment he made to porn actress Stormy Daniels on Trump's behalf before the election, though he has not been charged with any wrongdoing.

The audio also features Trump and Cohen discussing other matters, including an attempt by The New York Times to unseal the records from Trump's first divorce and mentioning pastor Mark Burns, a Trump supporter.

Cohen's attorney Lanny Davis provided CNN the September 2016 recording and said Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani had been "falsely disparaging" Cohen.

Giuliani contended that the recording would not harm Trump after news broke last week in The New York Times that the recording of Trump and Cohen was among those obtained by prosecutors. CNN [reported](#) that Trump's attorneys had waived his attorney-client privilege on the tape.

Giuliani, who [confirmed the existence](#) of the audio last week, responded on Wednesday to Davis' statements and the airing of the audio in a tweet claiming Davis was misrepresenting Trump's reference to "cash" in the recording and calling the information "privileged." Trump's legal team, however, previously waived Trump's attorney-client privilege on the recording.

"If Cohen is telling the truth why are he and Lanny Davis misrepresenting the language from President Trump "Do not pay by cash...CHECK." And why are they

leaking falsely privileged and confidential information. So much for ethics!" Giuliani tweeted.

Trump [expressed anger over the recording last weekend](#) on Twitter, calling both the seizure of the recording and Cohen's creation of it "inconceivable."

"Inconceivable that the government would break into a lawyer's office (early in the morning) - almost unheard of. Even more inconceivable that a lawyer would tape a client - totally unheard of & perhaps illegal. The good news is that your favorite President did nothing wrong!" Trump tweeted.

The FBI, however, was executing court-approved warrants in conducting the searches.

The FBI [raids on Cohen](#) came ahead of [a disclosure](#) from the Department of Justice in early April that the longtime Trump attorney had been "under criminal investigation" for months. The prosecutors for the Southern District of New York said at the time that special counsel Robert Mueller's office had referred a case about Cohen's business dealings to their office and had not been involved since.

Trump was outraged at the raid on Cohen in April, [declaring](#) on Twitter that "attorney client privilege is dead" on Twitter and [calling the search](#) "an attack on our country." In the months since, speculation has grown about what the legal pressure on Cohen might mean for Trump -- discussion far removed from Cohen's [claim last year](#) that he would "take a bullet" for the President. Cohen said [in an interview](#) with ABC published in early July that his family and country would come before his loyalty to Trump, and CNN [reported later](#) that Cohen had told his friends he did not think Trump would pardon him if it came to that point.

Giuliani said later he was unconcerned about Cohen moving to cooperate with federal prosecutors against Trump, [telling CNN](#) that he did not know what Cohen would have to "flip over."

After CNN first aired the Trump-Cohen recording on Tuesday evening, Davis said he believed Trump's team fears the President's former personal attorney.

"They fear that he has the truth about Donald Trump," Davis said.

Giuliani, meanwhile, argued on Fox News that Davis was wrong about what the audio showed and reiterated it showed "no indication" of a crime.

At the heart of their disagreement is an apparent reference from Trump in the audio to paying with cash, although the audio is muddled and each side disputes Trump's meaning.