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**From:** Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman  
**Sent:** 2017-05-18T07:12:31-04:00  
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**Subject:** POLITICO Playbook, presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.: The special prosecutor: ROBERT S. MUELLER III -- TRUMP's reaction to bad news: 'extremely measured' -- 'RADIO SILENCE' from White House on growing crisis -- EX-CAMPAIGN aides back in the fray  
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Today's PLAYBOOK presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co.

05/18/2017 07:02 AM EDT

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By JAKE SHERMAN ([sherman@politico.com](mailto:sherman@politico.com); [@JakeSherman](https://twitter.com/JakeSherman)) and ANNA PALMER ([anna@politico.com](mailto:anna@politico.com); [@apalmerdc](https://twitter.com/apalmerdc)) with DANIEL LIPPMAN ([daniel@politico.com](mailto:daniel@politico.com); [@dlippman](https://twitter.com/dlippman))

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## DRIVING THE DAY

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**Good Thursday morning.**

**CONNECTING THE DOTS** -- The Washington Post's Adam Entous published a fascinating story yesterday afternoon with a Kiev, Ukraine dateline, that had House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Speaker Paul Ryan going back and forth about Donald Trump and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) being on Vladimir Putin's payroll. The GOP leadership said the exchange was a joke, and the transcript notes several bouts of laughter. It's not clear where the story originated, but it does quote Evan McMullin, the failed presidential candidate who worked in House GOP leadership. ... **The McCarthy/Ryan transcript** <http://wapo.st/2rhXkU5>

-- **WAPO STORY: "Evan McMullin, who in his role as policy director** to the House Republican Conference participated in the June 15 conversation, said: 'It's true that Majority Leader McCarthy said that he thought candidate Trump was on the Kremlin's