

guys. We kind of thought so too.) Lieberman is the leading contender, according to the White House. **See *Burgess Everett and Seung Min Kim's story***
<http://politi.co/2qDrHSl>

-- SENIOR DEMOCRATIC AIDE: STAY WHERE YOU ARE, JOE: "Anyone who thinks Senate Democrats are going to welcome a Lieberman nomination with open arms doesn't understand Senate Democrats. This is the worst possible time to hand the FBI over to a politician of any stripe, let alone one whose judgment led him to praise the hiring of General Flynn for National Security Adviser. If the White House is spoiling for a fight on this, they'll get one."

IF YOU READ ONE THING -- GARRETT GRAFF, author of "The Threat Matrix: The FBI at War," in POLITICO Magazine, "What Donald Trump Needs to Know About Bob Mueller and Jim Comey: The two men who could bring down the president have been preparing their entire lives for this moment": "What unfolds ahead will be territory all too familiar to both Comey and Mueller-the field of play where they have made their careers and risen to the highest levels of government-yet the way that a Washington scandal takes on a life of its own amid independent investigations and looming prosecutions is deeply unfamiliar to Trump and many associates around him. ... It is as if, after having an unrelated disagreement over movie trivia in a bar, Trump has challenged Usain Bolt to a 100-yard dash or John Cena to a cage match to the death." <http://politi.co/2qZ1rVy>

NYT, A1 -- MIKE SCHMIDT STRIKES AGAIN -- "Comey, Unsettled by Trump, Is Said to Have Wanted Him Kept at a Distance": "President Trump called the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, weeks after he took office and asked him when federal authorities were going to put out word that Mr. Trump was not personally under investigation, according to two people briefed on the call.

"Mr. Comey told the president that if he wanted to know details about the bureau's investigations, he should not contact him directly but instead follow the proper procedures and have the White House counsel send any inquiries to the Justice Department, according to those people. After explaining to Mr. Trump how communications with the F.B.I. should work, Mr. Comey believed he had effectively drawn the line after a series of encounters he had with the president and other White House officials that he felt jeopardized the F.B.I.'s independence. At the time, Mr. Comey was overseeing the investigation into links between Mr. Trump's associates and Russia. ...

"The day after the Flynn conversation, Reince Priebus ... asked Mr. Comey to help push back on reports in the news media that Mr. Trump's associates had been in contact with Russian intelligence officials during the campaign."

<http://nyti.ms/2q33205>

-- **WAPO: "Comey prepared extensively for his conversations with Trump,"** by Devlin Barrett, Ellen Nakashima and Adam Entous: "FBI Director James B. Comey prepared extensively for his discussions with President Trump, out of concern that the president was unlikely to respect the legal and ethical boundaries governing their respective roles, according to associates of the now-fired FBI chief."

<http://wapo.st/2qDtab4>

REMEMBER MIKE PENCE? The vice president is nowhere to be found these days. The separation Pence's team is putting between the VP and the president in this CNN piece is stunning.

-- **CNN'S ELIZABETH LANDERS:** "After a fast and furious news cycle at the White House this week, the last few days may have worn on Vice President Mike Pence. Though Pence will continue to be a 'loyal soldier' because he is a 'relentlessly positive guy,' he 'looks tired,' a senior administration adviser observed on Thursday, outlining the vice president's schedule and trying to explain his relative absence from the public eye.

"While an aide to the vice president says he spent the last few days in speech preparation, it conveniently kept him out of the firing line, missing a regular Senate lunch on Capitol Hill on Tuesday while he worked behind closed doors with President Donald Trump at a bilateral meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"The Pence team knew what they were getting themselves into when they joined the Trump ticket and team almost a year ago. 'We certainly knew we needed to be prepared for the unconventional,' but, the source adds, 'not to this extent.'"

<http://cnn.it/2qy9uqT> ... **AP story with a similar tone** <http://apne.ws/2ryeVUX>

***** **A message from JPMorgan Chase & Co.:** In just three years, JPMorgan Chase invested over \$100 million in Detroit's recovery, including community and small business development, workforce readiness and neighborhood revitalization to drive economic growth. Detroit is a case study for how the private sector can collaborate with government and community leaders to drive change. Learn more: