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Under fire, Trump adviser Roger Stone has long history in Atlantic County

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Roger Stone

stone Roger J. Stone Jr., an advisor for President Donald J. Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, speaks to members of the conservative group America First inside the Marriott in Boca Raton, Fla., on Tuesday, Mar. 21, 2017. Stone defended himself over contacts he had with Russia-linked hackers during the 2016 election. (Michael Ares / The Palm Beach Post via AP)

Michael Ares



Michael Ares / The Palm Beach Post via AP

Stone signs a copy of his book, 'The Making of the President 2016: How Donald Trump Orchestrated a Revolution,' for Stanley Tate, of Miami, during an event March 21 hosted by the conservative group America First in Boca Raton, Florida. Stone was the featured speaker and defended himself over contacts he had with Russia-linked hackers during the 2016 election.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — He has a history of calling people disgusting names. He has made statements that were unprovable or flat-out false, and he's now at the center of what could be the biggest political scandal of the 21st century: the Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

Roger Stone, who lives in Florida and was closely involved in Atlantic County politics for years, appeared in Boca Raton last week at a book signing and relished the spotlight.

Stone emphatically denied he colluded with Russians on behalf of Donald Trump or that Russia meddled in the U.S. election.

"Folks, the idea that there was Russian influence to tip this election to Donald Trump is a bald-faced, blatant lie," he said. U.S. intelligence agencies concluded Russia did try to interfere in the presidential race.

Stone also portrayed himself as a victim and attempted to put his critics on the defensive.

“This is the new McCarthyism,” Stone declared about congressional leaders who want an investigation.

The political consultant had a long list of South Jersey clients, and enemies — and some who were both.

Stone worked for candidates for Atlantic City mayor and Atlantic County executive. Along with representing Trump, Stone also lobbied for the Casino Association of New Jersey, has owned a Margate vacation condo and long talked about plans to write a biography of Hap Farley, who spent 34 years as Atlantic County’s state senator.

Stone credits Farley as a major player in the 1968 presidential victory for Richard Nixon, a man Stone calls one of his heroes.

Former Stone clients include another longtime state senator from Atlantic County, Bill Gormley, and a former state assemblyman, Ed Kline.

A 1988 story in The Press of Atlantic City reported Gormley’s campaigns paid Stone or firms he was involved with almost \$370,000 between 1982 and 1987. But the two later had a bitter break amid charges Stone orchestrated campaigns to damage Gormley politically — apparently to help another Stone client in New Jersey, former Gov. Christie Whitman.

The headline for that 1988 profile of the consultant: “In the Art of Mudslinging, Roger Stone is Rembrandt.”

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Stone is in the news because of the investigations into Russian involvement in the election.

Stone was in contact with Guccifer 2.0, which was involved in hacking the Democratic National Committee last year. And weeks before the hacked emails of Hillary Clinton campaign Chairman John Podesta were released, Stone ominously predicted on Twitter that Podesta would soon be in the barrel facing scrutiny.

Over the previous weekend, national news organizations reported the Senate Intelligence Committee asked Stone to preserve any documents that might pertain to his involvement with Russia and the election.

Stone spoke at a book-signing in Florida last week for 58 minutes, split evenly between remarks and answering audience questions. Parts of the speech were vintage Stone, offering conspiracy theories that could not be proven.

Around Christmas last year, he said, he was poisoned — possibly to shut him up when Senate Intelligence Committee leaders said they would investigate Russian election hacking. He said he had a fever higher than 100 degrees for 17 days, was hospitalized, became delusional and lost some of his hair.

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He repeated a claim he has been making in recent days, that a hit-and-run accident last week in Pompano Beach involving a car in which he was riding may have been deliberate. He suggested the accident could have been part of a plot to prevent him from speaking what he says is the truth about Russia and the election. A Broward Sheriff’s Office report — which said Stone had left the scene and was interviewed later — did not contain information to back up Stone’s claim.

“Pardon me for being suspicious. At a minimum I find this extraordinarily suspicious,” he said, adding he wants to testify before Congress. “They better have these hearings before somebody kills me.”

Press Staff Writer Martin DeAngelis contributed to this report.