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A Mueller Investigator Moves On (but Stays Mum)

Greg D. Andres was the first member of the special counsel's team to speak publicly since the report came out, but said little.



Greg D. Andres spent a dozen years at the Justice Department, 10 of them as a prosecutor at the office of the United States attorney's office for the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn. Credit: Jeenah Moon for The New York Times

By [William K. Rashbaum](#) and [Ben Protess](#) May 3, 2019

In the span of his 22-month investigation into President Trump, Robert S. Mueller III never held a news conference. When he delivered his report to the Justice Department in March, the special counsel issued no statements. Even this week, when [Attorney General William P. Barr](#) criticized aspects of the investigation, no one from Mr. Mueller's team responded.

The code of silence, followed by the lawyers and agents who worked for Mr. Mueller, has been an unusual feat in Washington, where leaks are as ubiquitous as partisan bickering. And Greg D. Andres was not interested in being the exception.

Mr. Andres, one of Mr. Mueller's senior prosecutors, agreed to an interview with The Times this week to discuss his return to the New York law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell, where he will be a partner. He said he was proud of the work in the special counsel's office, in the first public comments from a member of Mr. Mueller's team since the report was issued.

But he declined to discuss even trivial aspects of his experience working for Mr. Mueller. Over the course of an hour, Mr. Andres, wearing a trim blue suit and with a broken foot strapped into a black plastic boot, politely rebuffed one question after another.

What did he work on, besides taking the lead prosecution role in the trial of Mr. Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul J. Manafort? No comment.

What ran through his head when the president took aim at the special counsel's team on Twitter — calling them “angry Democrats” conducting a “witch hunt?” He again declined to answer.

Mr. Andres would not even explain how the members of Mr. Mueller's team were able to stay so quiet amid the public obsession with their work, [when it seemed like their every move was watched](#).

He would say only, “It was a great privilege for me to work with those people and those teams, and it was a particular privilege to work for Bob Mueller, who I have great respect for and is a man of great integrity.”

The trappings of the job were not glamorous. One of 19 lawyers who worked on the investigation at its peak, Mr. Andres spent part of his stint living in a Westin hotel room, across the street from the Virginia federal courthouse where Mr. Manafort was convicted on financial fraud charges. Mr. Andres, a triathlete, was known to snack on Lay's potato chips and Diet Coke. He and his colleagues conducted the broader investigation out of a building two blocks south of the National Mall, in a largely colorless section of Washington.

Mr. Andres, 52, is among several members of the Mueller team who came from private practice, and he is believed to be the first to return.

Most of the lawyers were temporarily assigned to the inquiry from other posts in the Justice Department and many are returning to United States attorneys' offices and other department jobs; at least one other prosecutor is going into private practice. One will teach at a law school.

At Davis Polk, where Mr. Andres was a partner before joining the special counsel's team in August 2017, he will return to handle white-collar defense and other litigation. During his time in Washington, he lived in a sparsely furnished one-bedroom apartment near Union Station, a short walk from the Special Counsel's office and a location that would hasten his Amtrak commute home to New York on weekends to see his wife — a federal judge — and their three daughters. Mr. Andres said he is happy “to be home.”

Earlier in his career, Mr. Andres spent a dozen years at the Justice Department, 10 of them as a prosecutor at the office of the United States attorney's office for the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn. There, he eventually rose to head the office's Criminal Division.

He had handled scores of cases against organized crime figures, playing a central role in an effort that gutted the Bonanno crime family and led to the convictions of more than 70 mobsters. He led the team that won murder and racketeering convictions against the Bonanno boss, Joseph C. Massino, who in 2005, facing the death penalty, became [the first Mafia chieftain to testify](#) against his own family.

Mr. Massino revealed at the time that Mr. Andres' success against the Bonannos had not gone unnoticed. He told the F.B.I. that the family's then acting boss, Vincent Basciano, known as Vinny Gorgeous, had plotted to kill Mr. Andres and the federal judge who oversaw Mr. Basciano's trial.

Mr. Andres spent his final two years at the Justice Department in Washington, working as a deputy assistant attorney general, overseeing the Criminal Division's sections for fraud, organized crime and gangs, death penalty cases and appeals. He helped oversee some of the earliest efforts to prosecute crimes arising from the 2008 financial crisis.

Now, he will be defending some of the same types of companies and executives.

"No one is really better at getting to the heart of complex financial issues, and that includes convincing the government when it doesn't have a case," said Neil MacBride, the former United States attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia who is now the co-head of Davis Polk's white-collar defense group.

Noah Weiland contributed reporting.