

NBC's *Today*
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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Final Report]

HODA KOTB: Final report. The FBI criticized for its handling of the 2016 Trump-Russia investigation. Just ahead, the long-awaited results of the special counsel's four-year probe. Why he says the agency should never have launched it in the first place. Former President Trump's reaction and what it means for the 2024 race.

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Report Criticizes FBI's Trump-Russia Probe]

CRAIG MELVIN: We now have the long-awaited results of a Trump-era special counsel investigation exploring the FBI's probe of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign and potential ties to the Trump campaign. NBC News Justice correspondent Ken Dilanian has the details on that. Ken, good morning. What do we know, sir?

KEN DILANIAN: Good morning, Craig. John Durham's report is filled with blistering criticism of the FBI for its decision to open that investigation of the Trump campaign, but critics say Durham's investigation ultimately fell flat, even though it lasted more than a year longer than the actual Russia investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Durham brought just two criminal cases that ended in acquittals and his report called for no major changes. This morning, the investigation that followed a political firestorm around the 2016 election —

DONALD TRUMP [on 10/14/20]: A horrible, horrible, disgusting witch hunt.

DILANIAN: — finally wrapping up ahead of the next one. Republicans saying it exposed serious wrongdoing by the FBI —

SENATOR KEVIN CRAMER (R-ND): The FBI has a lot of work to do.

DILANIAN: — while Democrats calling it a rehash that didn't live up to its billing.

CONGRESSMAN ADAM SCHIFF (D-CA): The investigation of the investigators by Durham revealed little to nothing.

DILANIAN: Mr. Trump on his TRUTH Social website, saying "the American public was scammed." But the report, though highly critical of the FBI, did not back up Mr. Trump's claims

that he was framed by a corrupt, deep state conspiracy.

DONALD TRUMP [on 08/10/20]: I think it's a political crime of the century.

DILANIAN: In fact, Special Counsel John Durham did not find corruption or even actions motivated by politics. Durham was tapped by Trump's attorney general, Bill Barr, to look into whether FBI officials abused their powers when they opened an investigation in 2016 code named Crossfire Hurricane, looking into allegations the Trump campaign had colluded with the Russian government. That eventually led to the appointment of Special Counsel Robert Mueller who, in the end, did not find a conspiracy between Trump and the Kremlin.

TRUMP [on 07/27/16]: Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 e-mails that are missing.

DILANIAN: Although Mueller did find a Trump campaign eager to accept help from Russians. Durham's report criticized what he called seriously deficient mistakes by the FBI, adding, the bureau was much more cautious and skeptical about allegations against the Clinton campaign. All potential fodder for Trump as he mounts another campaign for president. The FBI says it long ago overhauled how it handles national security investigations in response to that earlier inspector general's report and the attorney general now has to personally approve probes into national political campaigns.

MELVIN: Alright, Ken Dilanian for us there. Ken, thank you.