

60 MINUTES GOES BLACK-WHO DOES IT PROTECT?

As a number of you pointed out in the comments, 60 Minutes curiously went off the air in Northern Alabama last night for over half of the segment on Governor Siegelman. The station did rebroadcast the show at 10 PM last night. Still, the fact that just one station in Alabama lost the show just when it was showing a damning story on Alabama's politicized prosecutions sure reeks, particularly given the way the local newspapers have buried the story.

Now it is possible that the station's explanation—that its receiver went out—is true. But on the off chance that it's not, I wanted to look at whom the Bush crony-Bass owned station might have been trying to protect, if the lost signal was intentional.

According to this comment from Mooncat, the broadcast picked up just past midway.

The first thing I saw was Doug Jones and this is the first bit I recall hearing (p. 3)

"They started over. People started getting subpoenas that had never gotten subpoenas before, for testimony, for records. The governor's brother, his bank records started getting subpoenaed. The net was cast much wider than had ever been cast before," Jones says.

It may have been on for a few seconds before that, but not much.

Thus, the segment that showed included details about how DOJ got involved in the process:

Justice Department headquarters in Washington had ordered a top to bottom review of the case

And how Leura Canary oversaw a prosecution in which she had serious conflicts.

The prosecution was handled by the office of U.S. Attorney Leura Canary, whose husband Bill Canary had run the campaign of Siegelman's opponent, Gov. Riley.

"Why would you do it that way?" Woods asks. "Why wouldn't you say, 'You know what? We're going to bring in someone from another jurisdiction to do it."

So the blackout certainly didn't protect Leura Canary. But it did leave out the damning comment from Canary's husband, where he said "his girls" would fix his Siegelman problem.

Canary told her she didn't have to do more intelligence work because, as Canary allegedly said, "My girls" can take care of Siegelman. Simpson says she asked "Who are your girls?"

"And he says, 'Oh, my wife, Leura. You know, she's the Middle District United States Attorney.' And he said, 'And then Alice Martin. She is the Northern District Attorney, and I've helped with her campaign,'" Simpson says.

And it did block out Simpson's description of Rove asking her for oppo research on Siegelman did show:

"Karl Rove asked you to take pictures of Siegelman?" Pelley asks.

"Yes," Simpson replies.

"In a compromising, sexual position with one of his aides," Pelley clarifies.

"Yes, if I could," Simpson says.

[snip]

Simpson says she wasn't surprised that Rove made this request. Asked why not, she tells Pelley, "I had had other requests for intelligence before."

"From Karl Rove?" Pelley asks.

"Yes," Simpson says.

Once again, there may be a perfectly plausible explanation for why this station lost the feed of a story that would do its owners' friends some damage. And if they were trying to protect Rove and Canary, they ultimately failed to do so, since the rebroadcast the show and have focused a lot of attention on themselves and the story.

But suffice it to say that Northern Alabama's regular 60 Minutes watchers—those that weren't already engrossed with the Oscars—didn't see the part of the story that detailed plans to intentionally use the Federal Justice system to take out a political rival.