

FITZGERALD LEARNED ROVE WAS TRYING TO FIRE HIM IN 2005-WHILE ROVE WAS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION

In a supplement to his responses to the House Judiciary Committee, Patrick Fitzgerald confirms what we've always suspected: Karl Rove was trying to have Patrick Fitzgerald fired while Fitzgerald was still investigating Rove for his role in leaking Valerie Wilson's identity—and the timing lines up perfectly with the Administration's efforts to fire a bunch of US Attorneys.

Remember back in June, when Fitzgerald publicly suggested he had more details to share with Congress about Rove's efforts to get him fired?

"If I owe a response [about the putsch to remove him from his job], I owe it to Congress, first," Fitzgerald said when asked about all this after the verdict.

Well, it turns out Fitzgerald did share those details with Congress. And those details make it clear that Fitzgerald learned Rove was trying to fire him while Fitzgerald was still actively investigating Rove's role in the leak of Valerie Wilson's identity.

In my answers submitted on May 2, 2008, I noted in my response to Question Eleven that I omitted discussion of when I first learned that I might be asked to resign as United States Attorney. I declined to answer more fully due to the then pending trial of United States v. Antoin Rezko in the Northern District of Illinois. With that trial concluded, I can briefly elaborate further: I learned some time in or about early 2005 from

agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") that a cooperating witness (who later testified at the Rezko trial, but not about this topic) had advised the FBI agents that he had earlier been told by one of Mr. Rezko's co-schemers that it was the responsibility of a third person in Illinois to have me replaced as United States Attorney. I should be clear that I did not understand that any putative effort to replace me as United States Attorney was related to my conduct as Special Counsel but understood instead that it was related to the investigative activities of federal agents and prosecutors conducting a corruption investigation in Illinois. [my emphasis]

As a reminder, here's the allegation with all the names handily added in (though I think Fitzgerald is referring to someone besides Ata, because Ata was not yet cooperating with the Rezko prosecutors):

In a hearing before court began, prosecutors said they hoped to call Ali Ata, the former Blagojevich administration official who pleaded guilty to corruption yesterday, to the stand.

Assistant U.S. Atty. Carrie Hamilton said she believed Ata would testify to conversations Ata had with his political patron, Rezko, about working to pull strings to kill the criminal investigation into Rezko and others when it was in its early stages in 2004.

"[Ata] had conversations with Mr. Rezko about the fact that Mr. Kjellander was working with Karl Rove to have Mr. Fitzgerald removed," Hamilton told U.S. District Judge Amy St. Eve.

Note, Fitzgerald emphasizes that Rove was trying to fire him to protect Republican donor Bob Kjellander, not to protect Rove and Libby and Cheney. But that doesn't change the fact that Rove was in discussions about firing Fitzgerald while he—Rove—was under active investigation.

Also note the timing: while the discussions between this cooperating witness and (presumably) Kjellander happened earlier, the timing lines up with the effort to fire all the US Attorneys—and then, when Kyle Sampson suggested his name, Fitzgerald specifically—at the beginning of 2005.