

SO, WHY WERE THE US ATTORNEYS FIRED?

For so long now we have been eagerly awaiting the results on the DOJ IG/OPR investigation into the curious and unprecedented firing of nine US Attorneys by the Bush Administration. Heh, but will it ever really arrive? Will Karl Rove and Harriet Miers ever have to testify? Eh, I don't know, you have to wonder after a while. One thing is clear though, just about all of the original explanations given by the Bush Administration have been discounted, if not disproved.

Much discussed are the cases of David Iglesias, Bud Cummins, Carol Lam and John McKay. But right now, I am more interested in three of the lesser discussed of the sacked USAs. Margaret Chiara, Tom Heffelfinger and Paul Charlton.

There have been many discussions, both here and across the blogosphere dissecting why these particular US Attorneys were fired. There have been many theories, and the bottom line is that there is probably no one grand unifying theory other than that the Bush Administration was manipulating the DOJ and the USA offices for various political hit jobs; i.e. multiple motivations. One of the ones we have gone into here is the interplay with Native American issues. And Chiara, Heffelfinger and Charlton were all, due to the nature of their physical jurisdictions, highly involved in Native American issues. Marcy has done recent posts calling into question the legitimacy of the stated basis for firing Chiara.

Over a year and a half has passed since Margaret Chiara was fired with a bunch of other US Attorneys—and we still have no good explanation why she was targeted. The apparent reason, though, is a rumor that she was having a gay relationship with an AUSA in her office, traveled with her on the government

dime, and gave her preferential bonuses.

But today's Monica Goodling report includes a denial from Chiara and the AUSA—Leslie Hagen—that they were in a relationship.

So, if the stated rationale for Chiara's firing is in doubt, maybe we ought to give renewed consideration to the Native American aspects and implications. Marcy was on this early and hard with Native Americans And The USA Purge, Part I and Part II. Don't hesitate to take a look back at those posts, they are pretty interesting.

The reason I come back to this area is that today's Washington Post has a nice little article that similarly undercuts the stated rationale for the firing of Paul Charlton.

Justice Department officials have reversed course and approved a plea deal in a controversial death penalty case that may have prompted the firing of a U.S. attorney in Arizona nearly two years ago, according to court records and interviews.

...

Charlton had argued that the case was short on forensic evidence and was not suitable for what he called "the ultimate penalty." But officials in Washington overruled him in fall 2006, and he later became one of nine top prosecutors who were fired en masse that year. In congressional testimony last year, then-Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales said Charlton's reluctance to support the administration's position on capital punishment in the case amounted to "poor judgment" and attracted criticism in the department's political ranks.

It never made sense that Charlton was fired over one death penalty case up on the remote

reservation. Charlton had never himself made any public issue of the case. And now the very acts of the Department of Justice give the lie to that as a basis for the firing of Paul Charlton. This plea deal would have been cut and the case over two years ago if Paul Charlton had not have been jerked around and then fired. The exact same factors mitigating against demand for the death penalty existed then as exist now. This plea deal in US v. Jose Rios Rico, was clearly the decision by the DOJ Main, who, when it was desired to fire Paul Charlton, had said something quite different:

In congressional testimony last year, then-Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales said Charlton's reluctance to support the administration's position on capital punishment in the case amounted to "poor judgment" and attracted criticism in the department's political ranks.

So he was fired according to Alberto Gonzales. Or, as has always been suspected, and as we have confirmed today by the WaPo's reporting of the plea deal, not. So, why was Paul Charlton, not to mention the others, fired? It certainly was not the reasons testified to by Gonzales, Mercer, Sampson et. al testified to; will there be any repercussions for their false testimony? Where exactly is the IG/OPR Report anyway?