

WHO ACCESSED THE ROVE EMAIL SEARCH ON JULY 26, 2005?

As I explained in my last post, one of the documents turned over to CREW shows evidence of email searches done in 2004, presumably as part of the Plame investigation (and kudos, again, to W0 for noticing these searches). Pages 44 through 46 show a search conducted on November 9, 2004 for Cooper and Rove and NSC emails. This search is almost certainly in response to a Fitzgerald request after Rove turned over his email to Hadley before he testified on October 15, 2004. Presumably, after Fitz got an email that hadn't been turned over as evidence, he asked the White House to redo the search, which they got around to doing after making sure Bush won the election.

Interestingly, it appears there were almost no results for NSC files on July 14, 2003, the day Novak's column came out.

There are two more interesting details about this search.



On the bottom of page 45, in the last column, it shows three files were last opened on different dates than others.

Two files named WHO_2003_0309_26272829.pst and WHO_2003_930+923.pst were both last opened on July 28, 2004. This was a search for email mentioning Matt Cooper, apparently.

And a file named Rove Final.pst was opened on July 26, 2005.

Now, as to the first two searches last opened in July 2004, they may have been searches done in response to Judge Hogan's decision that Matt Cooper would have to testify. Or, just as likely, they might be searches in response to Colin Powell's testimony on July 16; recall the

story of a Principals meeting in late September at which the leak was discussed. But both of those stories would be weird: if the files were in preparation for Cooper's testimony, then why search on September 23 and 30, specifically—particularly since both of those dates come after Cooper's welfare article (for which Rove was a source) was published earlier in September? Alternately, if the search was a response to Powell's testimony, then why focus on Cooper in particular? And were those files just renamed later that year when the more expansive searches were done?

Then there's the other file: a search for Rove's emails completed in November 2004, but last opened on July 26, 2005. That says the search was done, but someone went back to see what the search was. The file was opened a few weeks after Matt Cooper testified about the leak from Rove. It was also just days before Rove aides Susan Ralston and Israel Hernandez testified and was in the same month that Robert Luskin offered to have Rove testify again (for what would be the fourth time). Now it doesn't make sense that the file would be opened in response to a Fitz request—presumably he already had that file, right? So did someone check that file to see what had come up in the search?

Also note—it was also around the same time that the ability to access the email server was discovered.

In mid-2005, prior to the discovery of the potential email issues, a critical security issue was identified and corrected. During this period it was discovered that the file servers and the file directories used to store the retained email .pst files were accessible by everyone on the EOP network.

So the file was available for anyone in the White House to look at.

The question is—who was looking?