


WHY WAS THE WHITE HOUSE SEARCHING FOR PLAME-WILSON-NOVAK EMAILS DATED MAY 1, 2003?

William Ockham made a really important discovery. One of the files turned over to CREW has search files from September and November 2004 relating to the Plame investigation. Look at pages 44-46 for Rove and Cooper searches and page 49 for Plame Wilson Novak searches.

Of particular interest, here are the days on which they were apparently searching for Plame Wilson Novak emails dated:



- May 1, 2003
- May 9, 2003
- May 16, 2003
- May 27, 2003
- June 2, 2003
- June 23, 2003
- June 30, 2003
- July 7, 2003
- July 12, 2003
- July 24, 2003
- August 8, 2003
- August 13, 2003
- August 27, 2003
- August 29, 2003
- October 9, 2003

Now, I'm not entirely sure what these dates mean, but my guess is they were a search run overnight on September 23, 2004 for appearances of Plame, Wilson, or Novak on particular dates, and the search results came back the next morning—September 24, 2004. That timing makes sense—it was when Patrick Fitzgerald had strong suspicions that Novak had talked to people in the White House about Plame. And, it was certainly after Fitz developed suspicions he

wasn't getting all the email (he asked Libby about the dearth of email in his name in March 2004).

So that timing makes sense. As do most of the dates searched. On June 2, OVP was panicking about a Walter Pincus article. The June 23 date is when Novak probably set up his meeting with Armitage and its the day Libby first leaked Plame's name to Judy. July 7, 2003 is the day when OVP decided to more aggressively leak Plame's name, and also a day when Novak was purportedly reporting on his Frances Fragos Townsend story, almost certainly with OVP. July 12 is when the White House started leaking Plame's name in anticipation of the Novak article, which was on the wire. The later days are all plausible dates of conversation with Novak. (Though note, they don't include July 8 or 9, 2003, when we know Novak spoke with Rove and Libby respectively about the Wilsons.

But May 1, 2003?

Before the Nicholas Kristof column came out? The day before Wilson and Kristof first spoke?