

WHY IS HAMPTON EMBARRASSING "THE FAMILY"?

Last night, Rachel did a superb job on a story we were the first to cover: Doug Hampton's efforts to get "the Family" to get John Ensign to stop sleeping with Hampton's wife (see Hampton's full interview [here](#)).

Now, in Hampton's description of "the Family," he emphasizes they're good men. And when Hampton first spoke, he did not mention "the Family" directly—we figured that out based on Ensign roomie's Tom Coburn's involvement.

But I wonder. Are Hampton's now-extensive discussion of "the Family" and Sanford's off-hand reference to it mistakes, or intentional efforts to expose the group?

For Hampton's part, I suspect he may have appealed to "the Family" because he knew—or hoped—it would be a quick way to a pay-off. And, given Coburn's statement that Ensign should have done as "the Family" told him to do, Hampton may have had good reason to believe so. That is, the reference that initially got me and Citizen92 looking at the circumstances of this confrontation closely ...

In fact one of the confrontations took place in February 2008 at his home in Washington DC (sic) with a group of his peers. One of the attendee's (sic) was Senator Tom Coburn from Oklahoma as well as several other men who are close to the Senator.

... May have been an implicit threat to expose the group, a reference explicit enough to communicate to Ensign and "the Family" that he'd describe the group's involvement if he did not get the pay-off they had recommended last year. Which is what we're seeing now, Hampton's

revenge for the failure of "the Family" to resolve it amicably.

Then what of Sanford's weepy reference, coming just a week or so after Hampton's partial exposure of "the Family"?

Did your wife and your family know about the affair before the trip to Argentina?

Yeah. We've been working through this thing for about the last five months. I've been to a lot of different—I was part of a group called C Street when I was in Washington, it was a Christian Bible study of some folks that ask Members of Congress hard questions that I think were very very important. I've been working with them.

[snip]

It was discovered five months ago.

That's a part of me that wonders whether Sanford—who appears to be discovering emotions usually first experienced during adolescence—just lost all filter in his confusion. But I'm not sure. If "the Family" ended up forcing Sanford's hand—making him split with his beloved Maria—how would he feel about the group? Furthermore, if "the Family" dictated he ditch the mistress if he wanted to retain their support for his power, then he may have floated the reference as the same kind of implicit threat as Hampton made.

I can't help but notice that Tom Coburn is the only guy making extensive efforts to quash any discussion of "the Family."

"John Ensign hasn't put me in a tough position at all," said Coburn, a housemate of Ensign's at a Capitol Hill home owned by a Christian fellowship. "The person that's deceiving now is Doug. And you all need to go do the investigation now on that side of it and

quit asking us and ask what's the motivation here." [snip] Hampton suggested that Coburn urged Ensign to write a February 2008 letter apologizing to Hampton's wife, Cindy, a campaign aide to Ensign.

But on Thursday, Coburn said: "He is in error, and he's manipulating the situation and you are all buying it."

"I was never present when a letter was written, never made any assessment of paying anybody anything. Those are untruths. Those are absolute untruths."

And I can't help but wonder whether we're hearing about "the Family" now because certain members of it are rebelling against its authoritarian trade-off for power.