

IT'S A SMALL WORLD-IMPUGNING A WITNESS EDITION

Wow. Brent Wilkes co-conspirator John Michael is going after Tommy Kontogiannis hard. And they've got a very interesting way to do it (hat tip to CC for the alert).

As you'll recall, John Michael is the least famous of the thugs indicted in the larger Duke Cunningham scandal—Michael was involved in the mortgage company money laundering side of things. Originally, Michael was indicted seemingly almost as an afterthought (except that he allegedly lied in interviews with investigators). But a superseding indictment almost certainly prepared with the cooperation of Kontogiannis added three charges to his indictment. It's clear there's something funky about Kontogiannis—he has been in trouble with the law before, but every time—and this time—the government seems to let him off easy. The government's attempts to seal trial materials relating to Kontogiannis' plea after the fact seemed to most hurt Michael, since Michael's indictments must be tied to Kontogiannis' cooperation.

In a new filing, Michael's lawyer is basically arguing that Kontogiannis got special treatment from the government. And he's alleging that he got that special treatment, among other reasons, because Kontogiannis and his daughter had ties to the late uncle of one of the AUSAs prosecuting the case, Phillip Halpern.