

# AUGUST 24

The WaPo provides more details on an investigation I'm rather interested in:

Fine's office has also separately **expanded a probe** into whether senior Gonzales aides improperly considered partisan affiliations when reviewing applicants for nonpolitical career positions. As part of that inquiry, Fine sent hundreds of questionnaires in the past week to former Justice Department job applicants. [my emphasis]

Here's the questionnaire and the cover letter (and kudos to the WaPo for posting both).

Paul Kane actually does good bloggy work on extracting the content of the questionnaire. As Kane points out, the questionnaire asks about Monica Goodling's questions, but also Kyle Sampson, Jan Williams, and Angela Williamson. Williamson seems to have been in charge of logistics in OAG in 2005 and was cc'ed on a lot of the emails pertaining to Tim Griffin's hiring in DOJ. Jan Williams was OAG's White House Liaison just before Monica took the position; in a response to a Waxman request, DOJ revealed that it does not have paper copies of her files from her tenure at the position.

As Kane points out, the questionnaire asks applicants if anyone from the White House sat in on interviews. The questionnaire also tracks attendance of people from the Deputy Attorney General's office (remember—Sampson had tried to take hiring power away from Comey, and they institutionalized such a practice with the AG delegation in March 2006). In addition to questions on political affiliation (of which one asks about "your position on the war on terror"), the questionnaire asks about questions pertaining to religious beliefs, sexual orientation, adultery, abortion, same-sex

marriage, and any other unusual questions.

Now, frankly, I'm a little disappointed that it has taken three months since Monica admitted "crossing the line" in her testimony, four months since OIG first started investigating this, and five months since I first noted Schumer's hints about Monica's politicization of the hiring process. Though the reference to an expansion of the investigation perhaps means that Fine has now established that Monica was not the only one asking these questions—if all four people about whom he asks were asking political questions of job candidates, then it suggests that someone was directing them to do so.

Which gets into the interesting point about timing. The date on Fine's letter is August 24—the same day that Alberto Gonzales resigned. I've suggested before that the Administration is immunizing itself from big scandal by having those who committed Civil Hatch violations resign. Even if they are found guilty, they cannot be punished. And Gonzales went on the very day this investigation expanded.

But here's the other question about timing. The letter asks for details about interviews going back to January 1, 2004. Meaning, Fine suspects this politicization **precedes** the Alberto Gonzales at DOJ.