

TWO MORE DETAILS ON THE RATHER COMPLAINT

Hey! Howie Kurtz has decided to do some reporting!!

He has two pieces on the Dan Rather lawsuit today. In a piece based on an interview of Rather, he notes that Moonves and Heyward demanded Rather resign the day after Bush was re-[s]elected.

Rather insisted to reporters on Nov. 23, 2004, that his decision to step down as anchor the following spring was entirely voluntary. But yesterday he said Heyward and Moonves, the CBS chairman, had called his agent 20 days earlier — the morning after Bush's reelection — and said that he had to relinquish the chair immediately. Rather wound up staying until March 2005, which he says is close to the time he had planned to step down anyway.

So apparently, now we're making continued employment for journalists based on who is President?

In an earlier piece, Kurtz reveals why Rather decided to sue. Rather investigated the PI who was purportedly hired to complete the investigation of Bush's record. And he discovered that the PI was actually out investigating him and Mapes—and had determined the documents to be authentic.

Asked why Rather would sue more than a year after leaving CBS, Gold said the former anchor was "a bit appalled" at new information he said had emerged involving a private investigator, Erik Rigler, who was hired by the network during the 2004 controversy. Rigler, a former FBI agent, "was trying to dig up dirt on Dan and Mary Mapes," Gold said,

declining to elaborate.

When CBS came under fire over the story, Gold said, Rather told Heywardhe wanted to hire an investigator at his own expense, but Heyward responded that CBS would retain such a person. Gold said, again without providing evidence, that Rigler concluded that the Guard memos were authentic and the story accurate. He was interviewed by the Thornburgh-Boccardi panel, which accused Rather and CBS of a "myopic zeal" to rush the story to air five days after obtaining the disputed papers.

Reached by phone, Rigler declined to comment last night.

And in Kurtz' later piece, Rather explains a little more about Rigler.

Here Rather wades deep into the weeds, talking about how a private investigator he hired dug up information on a "mystery man" – an ex-FBI agent retained by CBS to look into the story once it came under fire. Rather said the network ignored this consultant's allegedly supportive findings and more recently, accused the former anchor of "harassing" the man.

In the aftermath of the 2004 segment, Rather said, he wanted to keep investigating the Guard story himself, but CBS executives "shut it down." CBS, for its part, was trying to obtain an independent assessment at a time when Rather's reporting was under attack.

For Howie Kurtz, "deep in the weeds" generally means "Howie doesn't understand."

So here's what appears to have happened: Rather told CBS he was going to pay for an

investigation himself. Instead, CBS paid this guy Rigler to do so. Since then, Rather has hired his own PI (PI squared, as it were),

He said he hired "a team of people," with "money out of my own pocket," to investigate CBS's handling of the story that led to his downfall as anchor.

...Who discovered certain things about Rigler: that he basically found the documents to be authentic, that he told the committee investigating the story as much, but that somehow that never made the report. Oh—and just as important—that Rigler was investigating Rather and Mapes.

Elsewhere, Rather talks about doing this to get people under oath. I'm wondering whether he's thinking of Rigler ... or Moonves.