

WHAT RILEY SAID ABOUT ROVE

Let's take a look at what Rob Riley had to say about Karl Rove's involvement in Don Siegelman's investigation and prosecution in his affidavit. In the midst of an affidavit full of "I don't remember" and "I don't recall," Riley says some very specific things about Rove.

The first mention comes toward the end of a very long, very hedged statement about the phone call on November 18, 2002. Note the reason for the hedge: thanks to Republican willingness to publish Jill Simpson's affidavit, Riley knew that Simpson had proof of the phone call. So Riley says,

I have no memory of being on a phone call with Jill Simpson ("Ms. Simpson") on November 18, 2002. Furthermore, I do not believe a phone call occurred ... in which ... Mr. Canary allegedly made statements to the effect that "his girls" would take care of Mr. Siegelman, or that "Karl" had spoken to, or gone over to, the Department of Justice and that the Department of Justice was pursuing, or would pursue, a case against Siegelman.

The whole paragraph is a big sloppy mess (and I've tried to make the grammatical structure of it clearer by taking out the extraneous bits). But as to the assertion that Karl Rove spoke to DOJ about the Siegelman prosecution, Riley only ever says he does not believe the phone call in question occurred. This is not a denial that he knew Rove had gotten involved with DOJ—just a statement that he believes a call—at which such matters were discussed—occurred. Which given that this is the same carefully hedged story that Canary and Butts are telling too, is not surprising.

Then Riley goes on to deny that Rove has given

free lobbying assistance for Simpson's clients.

I have never requested Karl Rove's ("Mr. Rove") assistance to "speed up" checks for any of Ms. Simpson's clients, or his assistance on any other federal matter, nor have I ever told Ms. Simpson that I was doing so. Ms. Simpson's belief that I e-mailed a copy of the a document to Mr. Rove regarding a matter associated with a FEMA appeal is not correct. The document that Ms. Simpson has discussed in her testimony was sent to Mr. Karl Dix, who is an attorney in Atlanta, Georgia, practicing with the law firm of Smith, Currie, and Hancock, who provided assistance with the appeal. Furthermore, I did not tell Ms. Simpson that Mr. Rove was assisting with this project.

This is a much more assertive claim: Rove did not assist Simpson through Riley, and Riley never said Rove had.

This is the claim that I look forward to seeing more details on, not least because it appears to be one the Republicans on the committee were most concerned about. Recall that Simpson gave the Committee just a selection of backup to her claim—she may well have more emails addressed to "Karl" in that bunch. In the meantime, Riley's story likely cannot be checked—if Karl Dix did help out, attorney-client privilege may protect details of what he did or didn't do. If anyone were really investigating it, they could ask for phone records between Riley and Dix. But when you're the governor's son, things like this don't often happen. Though I gotta say, it's rather interesting for one law firm to do favors for another firm without memorializing it in some kind of document.

But what I'm really curious about is the subtle hedge Riley inserted.

I have never requested Karl Rove's ("Mr. Rove") assistance to "speedup" checks

for any of Ms. Simpson's clients, or his
assistance on anyother **federal** matter,
[my emphasis]

Riley is not denying that Rove has helped him
out. Just not on **federal** matters.

Which suggests there's documents and (likely)
people who will testify that Karl Rove has done
other work for Riley (and likely, his dad), and
that Riley was very careful to limit his claim
here.