

PAXSON REFRESHES MCCAIN'S MEMORY

Rut Roh.

Bud Paxson's memory seems to corroborate that of McCain's former aides and McCain's signed deposition, both of which suggest that McCain met with Paxson—and Iseman—personally before he sent his letters to the FCC. Or, to put it another way, Paxson says McCain's little promises yesterday were false.

Broadcaster Lowell "Bud" Paxson today contradicted statements from Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign that the senator did not meet with Paxson or his lobbyist before sending two controversial letters to the Federal Communications Commission on Paxson's behalf.

Paxson said he talked with McCain in his Washington office several weeks before the Arizona Republican wrote the letters to the FCC urging a rapid decision on Paxson's quest to acquire a Pittsburgh television station.

Paxson also recalled that his lobbyist, Vicki Iseman, attended the meeting in McCain's office and that Iseman helped arrange the meeting. "Was Vicki there? Probably," Paxson said in an interview with The Washington Post today. "The woman was a professional. She was good. She could get us meetings."

So Paxson effectively deems McCain's performance yesterday a lie. Though I'm not sure how credible we should judge him, since he seems to think we have "thousands" of members of Congress.

Paxson saw no particular significance in the meeting with McCain prior to his

penning the FCC letters. "Vicki Iseman, probably between myself and [Paxson Communications President] Dean Goodman at that time, took us in to see a thousand senators and congressmen," Paxson said. "She was our lobbyist. She was there and helped."

Paxson seems quite interested in defending the honor of Iseman. But the most intriguing detail, IMO, stains the honor of all involved.

The second letter came on Dec. 10, a day after the company's jet ferried McCain to a Florida fundraiser aboard a yacht in West Palm Beach. The fundraiser was arranged by Hector Alcalde of Alcalde & Fay and was hosted by a cruise line that Alcalde had represented, Paxson said. Paxson said he attended the fundraiser.

As I suspected, Paxson flew McCain to a fundraiser in FL, organized by Iseman's boss, and probably hosted at the house of the owner of Carnival Cruise lines. Paxson, Iseman, McCain, Alcalde—they all were there. In other words, this was Alcalde and Fay as a company sponsoring McCain's campaign, not just individual clients of Iseman's who had businesses with McCain.

The stories about John Weaver chasing Iseman away have always suggested, to me, that her closeness (and her bragging about her closeness to McCain) created that perception that McCain was Alcalde and Fay's Senator, not just Iseman's. And the confirmation that this fundraiser was about several of Alcalde and Fay's clients, and not just Paxson, certainly supports that perception.