

SIS HAS “FILLED IN” THE BLANKS



I gotta say, Steven McDevitt and his colleagues appear pretty skeptical that all of the OVP emails responsive to Fitzgerald’s subpoenas were actually recovered.

I noted yesterday that there had been two parallel attempts to recover the OVP email missing from the period when Libby and Cheney invented their cover story for having leaked Valerie Plame’s identity. Page 43-46 of the Additional Materials is the documentation from McDevitt’s attempt to reconstruct the emails. It consists of a plan developed on November 28, 2005 to reconstruct the emails, with updates from January 20, 2006 describing the results of that attempt.

The environment information gathering activities were successfully completed. As a result, it was determined that the Exchange server used to support the OVP mailboxes was [redacted] and the Journal Mailbox server that was used during the target period was OVP_JOURNAL.

[snip]

Analysis of the files contained on the file server that were used to store .PST files during the target period was performed and no messages were found that filled the gap of missing messages for the target period.

[snip]

The server that contained the journal mailboxes for the target period was successfully restored, This was from a backup that was performed on 10/21/2003. The journal mailboxes were examined and no messages for the target period were

present in the journal mailbox.

[snip]

The Exchange server that contained the OVP mailboxes for the target period was restored from a backup that was performed on 10/21/2003. OA Human Resources produced a list of active OVP staff for the target period. This list was reviewed and confirmed by OVP.

The Exchange server that contained the OVP mailboxes was restored. This was from a backup that was performed on 10/21/2003. The email from the target period was extracted from each of the 70 OVP mailboxes and copied to a .PST file. [my emphasis]

In response to this report, on January 23, 2006 McDevitt writes a group of people who had worked on the restoration attempt and the larger missing email problem.

Someone needs to fill in some of the blanks.

Susan Crippen responds just two hours later.

SIS has "filled in" the blanks.

We know from the Committee report that a White House team wrote a document one day later—on January 24—claiming to have recovered 17,956 emails from the email backup tapes.

According to a document dated just four days later that was shown to Committee staff, but not provided to them, the White House team recovered 17,956 e-mails from these individual mailboxes on the backup tape and used these as their basis to search for e-mails responsive to the Special Counsel's request.

In his interrogatory, McDevitt makes clear that


he had nothing to do with this effort—and is rather quiet about it.

There was a parallel effort to attempt to recover all email from this period. The results of this effort were the 250 pages of email. However, I was not directly involved in this process and am unable to provide any details relating to the 250 pages of email.

What McDevitt doesn't say—perhaps because the White House doesn't want him to talk about this stuff—is that someone whose technical abilities he apparently trusted, Susan Crippen, considered the efforts of SIS (whatever that is) to be farcical enough that she referred to the outcome of that effort using square quotes, SIS "filled in" the blanks.

Now there's a lot of reason to doubt the completeness of the final recovery process. OVP had 15 days between the time when the emails and logs disappeared and the time when an actual backup of their email archives was made. Those 15 days span from the time when Libby and Cheney were concocting their cover story through the first. On October 7—the day after the period for which there were no emails or logs—Jenny Mayfield dodged her responsibility for turning emails over by saying, "I understand that you, David Addington, have done a central email search."



And then on February 5, when she certified her response to the subpoena that would actually have produced the emails in question (it asked for materials relating to, among other things, Wilson, Niger, and Plame since October 1), Mayfield again pawned off her responsibilities on David Addington. 

In other words, at least Libby and his assistant very conveniently didn't do a localized search for precisely the emails that might have "filled

in" the blanks.

Also, during that same 15 day period between when OVP wrote emails that mysteriously disappeared without a log, most of OVP had their first interviews with the FBI, giving them at least an inkling of the scope of the investigation.

Now, I don't know what SIS is, but I would wager that Susan Crippen (and McDevitt) believe its efforts to "fill in the blanks" of the missing email to be wholly inadequate. Since there should have been a log of the missing emails, but wasn't, it makes it very possible that someone made sure not all emails would be recovered.

No wonder Theresa Payton is in no hurry to reconstruct all the missing emails.