

WHO IS CARL TRUSCOTT AND WHY DID BUSH'S DOJ PROTECT HIM?

Actually, I know who Carl Truscott is—he's the former head of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms who resigned in 2006 under pressure for financial and other management abuses. But what I'm really interested in is why Bush's DOJ went to great lengths to protect him.

Truscott's Abuses

The former Deputy Director of BATF, Edgar Domenech, filed a whistleblower complaint on Monday asserting that he was demoted for reporting Truscott's abuses. Domenech's complaint details Truscott's abuses, including:

- Creating his own personal security detail
- Dragging official photographers to all his events
- Building a gym expansion in a building that would only be used for two additional years
- Adding \$4 million in design changes to the new BATF headquarters
- Hiring an unqualified former co-worker to an Assistant Director position

Perhaps the best example of Truscott's egomania is the way he'd invite his buddies over for lunch on the BATF's dime:

On numerous occasions during Director Truscott's tenure, he has invited individuals representing private'

corporations and businesses with no apparent connection to ongoing contracts or activities with ATF to have lunch at government expense in his office or at nearby restaurants. Many of these individuals are former members of the Secret Service, or were referred to him by retired or current Secret service members. During the course of these meals, two female (GS-13 and GS-12) staff members are required to serve Director' Truscott and his guests in the Director's' Office and have been specifically instructed to announce to the Director that "Lunch is served", causing undue humiliation to these professional staff employees and forcing them to engage in activity at work which is outside the scope of their duties. This is clearly indicative of a hostile work environment towards women. These employees have not advised Director Truscott that these unexpected service requests are degrading for fear of reprisal and intimidation. Initially, the lunches he hosted were sandwiches, however he recently demanded of staff to provide hot meals for his personal guests, which the staff must arrange, acquire and serve, causing additional strain and hours for ATF support staff to ensure the meals are served at appropriate temperatures. [my emphasis]

The complaint goes on to explain that Truscott's financial mismanagement resulted in a net \$20 million loss in BATF's operating budget in FY 2006, leading to shortages of key equipment and capabilities.

In many ways, Domenech's descriptions of Carl Truscott remind me of descriptions of Rachel Paulose's ill-fated fiefdom as USA for Minnesota, with the same focus on self-promotion and little focus on the management of the agency.

DOJ's Protection

Yet in spite of Domenech's documentation of such abuses (which were confirmed by an OIG investigation), DOJ protected Truscott. For example, in late 2006 and early 2007, Domenech and the Director of Field Operations twice approached the Deputy Attorney General's office with the problems, but got no response. Domenech again approached the DAG in February 2007, but was dismissed.

Mr. Mercer was dismissive of Mr. Domenech's concerns and equally dismissive of the complaint that had been filed, expressing his belief, and that of the DAG office, that the complaint was motivated by "disgruntled career staff."

Truscott resigned in August 2007, but even after that, DOJ protected him. In May 2007, Truscott's replacement, Michael Sullivan, invited Truscott to the department's annual memorial service. In August 2007, Sullivan invited Truscott to the annual awards ceremony and thanked him for his leadership.

On January 17, 2007, 41 days after eight US Attorneys were fired en masse, Domenech was demoted three levels. The excuse was similar to the one used with the USAs (though Domenech is a career employee, therefore presumably not subject to such political whims): the department was going to go in a different direction; Domenech didn't share Sullivan's vision of the department. But Domenech alleges he was fired because he's the one who forced DOJ to deal with Truscott's incompetence and abuses.

Why Did DOJ the White House Protect Truscott?

I said earlier than Truscott reminds me of Rachel Paulose, so on one level, it should not be surprise DOJ protected Truscott. DOJ made several efforts to help Paulose stay in her USA position. And when Mukasey came in, they quietly moved Paulose to another position in DOJ rather

than firing her.

But the thing is, we know why DOJ was so loyal to Paulose. In addition to being one of Gonzales' clique members, Paulose had defended the GOP in an election-related case, defended a faith-based healthcare program, and had fought against non-American detainees claiming rights via international treaties. Paulose had demonstrated, both ideologically and through her work, that she was a loyal member of Bush's team. So they showed her the same loyalty in return.

So what did Carl Truscott do to deserve the same loyal treatment?

Domenech's complaint makes it clear that Truscott's protection came directly from the White House.

In December 2006, Messrs. Domenech and [Director of Field Operations] approached two Assistant Principal Attorney Generals, Richard Hertling and Uttarn Dhillon, and expressed their concerns over the future of ATF and its current financial situation, which would soon be escalating into a crisis. Mr. Hertling and Mr. Dhillon acknowledged that Mr. Truscott appeared to be in over his head, but since his name came directly from the White House, there was little to be done about the situation.

But perhaps that's not a surprise. After all, Truscott's chief preparation for running BATF came from working at the White House ... as Special Agent in Charge of the Secret Service's Presidential Protective Division and after that, in charge of Secret Service's IT. And while there, Truscott appears to have gotten an award every year of Bush's term.

Mr. Truscott joins the Bureau from the U.S. Secret Service, where he served as the Assistant Director of the Office of Protective Research and was responsible

for the Secret Service's investigative and protective intelligence, threat assessment activities, technical security, information technology, emergency preparedness, as well as science and technology. Prior to his term as Assistant Director, Mr. Truscott served as the Special Agent in Charge of the Presidential Protective Division, where he had primary responsibility for supervising all protective matters relating to the President, First Family and the White House.

Mr. Truscott has received numerous awards and commendations throughout his distinguished law enforcement career, including: the Director's Life Saving Award in 1986; Senior Executive Service performance awards in 2001 and 2002; a Special Award for Distinguished Service to the Executive Office of the President in 2002; and the Presidential Rank Award as Meritorious Executive in 2003. [my emphasis]

Note, there is not necessarily something suspicious about Truscott moving from protecting President Bush to being protected by Bush as Truscott trashed the BATF. Bush is, after all, the kind of guy that appoints cronies of all types, and Bush may have just grown chummy with Truscott when Truscott was protecting him.

But then consider the favors Secret Service did for Bush. Truscott worked in Secret Service during the period when a gay prostitute started visiting the White House for overnight visits. Truscott appears to have been in charge of Presidential Protection during the period when Abramoff was visiting the White House—the records of which visits the White House later tried to hide. Truscott was also at the White House during the period when the Secret Service adopted its processes for records management with regard to visitors' records. (Though Truscott left the Secret Service long before OVP

ordered Secret Service to give it all records of visitors to the Vice President's Residence.)

In other words, while at the White House, Truscott was in the position to do all sorts of favors for—or to collect all sorts of embarrassing information about—George Bush. It's worth noting, too, that Truscott's abusive lunches and inappropriate hire involved buddies from the Secret Service—so even active officers were benefiting from Truscott's little fiefdom.

Bush's DOJ went to some trouble to make sure Truscott didn't pay for his abuse of office. I wonder why.

Update: fiefdom corrected per MadDog.