

ISN'T IT TIME TO CHAT WITH KYLE SAMPSON AGAIN?

Here's an exchange between Dick Durbin, Senior Senator from Illinois, and Rove acolyte Kyle Sampson about the firing of Patrick Fitzgerald.

Durbin: Were you ever party to any conversation about the removal of Patrick Fitzgerald from his position as Northern District of Illinois US Attorney?

Sampson: I remember on one occasion in 2006, in discussing the removal of US Attorneys ... or, the process of considering some US Attorneys that might be asked to resign, that I was speaking to Harriet Miers and Bill Kelley and I raised Pat Fitzgerald. Immediately after I did it I regretted it. I thought, I knew it was the wrong thing to do. I knew that it was inappropriate. And I remember at the time that Harriet Miers and Bill Kelley said nothing, they just looked at me. I regretted it and I withdrew it at the time and I regret it now.

Durbin: Do you recall what you said at the time about Patrick Fitzgerald?

Sampson: I said, Patrick Fitzgerald could be added to this list.

Durbin: And, there was no response?

Sampson: No. They looked at me like I had said something totally inappropriate, and I had.

Durbin: Why did you do it? Why did you recommend, or at least suggest that he be removed as US Attorney?

Sampson: I'm not sure, I don't remember.

I think it was maybe to get a reaction from them. I don't think that I, I know that I never seriously considered putting Patrick Fitzgerald on a list and he never did appear on a list.

Now put that exchange together with Rove's non-denial denial that he was involved in having Patrick Fitzgerald fired:

But Robert Luskin, Rove's attorney, today issued an unequivocal statement about all of this to the Tribune on behalf of Rove, former deputy chief of staff to President Bush, architect of Bush's presidential campaigns and a private consultant in Washington now.

"Karl has known Kjellander for many years," Luskin said, "but does not recall him or anyone else arguing for Fitzgerald's removal. And he (Rove) is very certain that he didn't take any steps to do that, or have any conversations with anyone in the White House – or in the Justice Department – about doing anything like that."

Of course, when Rove says "I don't recall" about an event, it usually means, "I won't admit it until you show more evidence" about that incident. That is, Rove doesn't deny that he knew that his close buddy Kjellander discussed firing Fitzgerald. He simply doesn't recall it. Just like he didn't recall outing Valerie Plame until his memory got refreshed with hard evidence.

Yet somehow that non-event–Kjellander discussing getting Fitzgerald fired–seemed to reverberate a year later, when Kyle Sampson was putting together his list of US Attorneys to fire. Rove buddy Kjellander, Rove acolyte Sampson. Now perhaps it's just a coincidence that such close associates of Rove seem to be thinking the same thing. But I don't think so.

Isn't it time to ask Sampson whether he ever spoke with Kjellander—or anyone else in Illinois—about firing Fitz?