

DOWN THE TOOBZ: TED STEVENS INDICTED ON SEVEN COUNTS

TV news is reporting that Ted "Toobz" Stevens has been indicted on seven counts of public corruption. (Update: A DOJ press conference is scheduled for 1:20.)

Wouldn't you know that "Toobz" would go down based on electronic surveillance?

The FBI, working with an Alaska oil contractor, secretly taped telephone calls with Sen. Ted Stevens as part of a public corruption sting it was reported late last year, according to people close to the investigation.

The secret recordings suggest the Justice Department was eyeing Stevens long before June 2007, when the Republican senator first publicly acknowledged he was under scrutiny. At that time, it appeared Stevens was a new focus in a case that had already ensnared several state lawmakers.

The recorded calls between Stevens and businessman Bill Allen were confirmed by two people close to the case who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is still under way. They declined to say how many calls were recorded or what was said.

Stevens has two primary challengers, one who just started dumping money into the race and another self-financing millionaire. Update: There are six other Republicans on the primary ballot with Toobz. But the deadline for new candidates has passed, so the Republicans will be stuck with either Indicted-Toobz or one of the other six.

Update: CBS says they're false statements

charges.

A federal grand jury in Washington has handed up the indictment against Stevens – which the Justice Department is set to announce very shortly.

Stevens faces seven counts of false statements involving VECO, the oil services company in Alaska, and the renovations done on his home.

Update from the press conference—and with the indictment itself.

Acting AAG, Criminal Division Matt Friedrich (he replaced Alice Fisher) said they didn't go for bribery here bc they didn't have a clear quid pro quo for VECO. It was more like Stevens was just VECO's Senator.

Friedrich said they didn't charge a tax violation bc these were gifts, and you don't have to declare gifts on your taxes.

Instead, they charged him generally for false statements, and then with one tied to each yearly financial disclosure from 2001 to 2006.