

SARAH PALIN'S EVOLVING EXCUSES FOR FIRING WALT MONEGAN

As each new event plays out in TrooperGate, I can't help but shake my sense of deja vu: the scandal is so much like the US Attorney purge I feel like I've already seen it before.

Today, that sense of deja vu comes from watching Sarah and the McPalin campaign keep changing the reasons they give for why Palin fired Walt Monegan. Andrew Halcro has a detailed chronology, from which I've done this summary:

February 29: Palin "really liked" Monegan, except regarding issues pertaining to her former brother-in-law

July 14: "Wanted to change leadership"

July 21: Palin wanted "more of a focus on trooper recruitment and fighting drug and alcohol abuse in rural Alaska" (though she had offered him a job doing just that)

August 13: Monegan wanted too much money for funding (he was fighting to get the funding the Governor had asked for)

September 15: Monegan had a "rogue mentality" (including, specifically, he went to DC without telling Palin in hopes of getting increased funding to fight sexual assault)

Now think of the changing reasons for the firings in the US Attorney purge:

David Iglesias:

- Referred to as an "up and comer" in 2004
- Immediately after the firing, DOJ accused Iglesias

of being an "absentee landlord" (which would have made the firing illegal, since Iglesias traveled to serve in the Navy Reserve)

- Later, they claimed Pete Domenici had asked Gonzales to be fired in calls in late 2005 and early 2006 (in fact, Domenici was asking whether Iglesias had the resources he needed)
- The real reason for the firing appears to be twofold: first, that Iglesias wasn't prosecuting enough voter fraud (though Iglesias was considered a top expert on voter fraud within the department), and second, that Iglesias wouldn't indict a top Democrat before the 2006 election

John McKay

- DOJ claimed they fired McKay because he was insubordinate to Paul McNulty in championing a records-sharing system, LiNX
- Later, they suggested McKay was too negative when trying to find the killer of one of the AUSAs in his office
- As late as August 2006, McKay was considered for a

federal judgeship

- The real reason for his firing appears to be his unwillingness to push baseless voter fraud cases

Paul Charlton

- DOJ complained that Charlton fought to tape FBI interviews in child-molestation on reservations (though they had approved a test program for doing so)
- Gonzales complained that Charlton challenged one death penalty decision

The real reason for his firing may have related to the Rick Renzi investigation

Consider the similarities: Like Monegan, all three of these men were considered superb professionals, with the utmost interest in serving the public. Like Monegan, these men were later attacked for showing initiative in responding to key law enforcement issues. Like Monegan, Iglesias was attacked in an area that he had been asked to focus on. As with Palin on Monegan, DOJ relied on vague claims of insubordination when its other excuses began to crumble.

And like Monegan, all these fictional and changing excuses behind the firing attempted to cover up a real abuse of power.