

EITHER TODD PALIN OR WALT MONEGAN DIDN'T TELL THE TRUTH

Two details of this detailed NYT article on TrooperGate stick out to me (h/t lemondoulou). In this post I'll look at how Walt Monegan's testimony contradicts the First Dude's. Here's what First Dude had to say in his affidavit.

I was not aware of the Grimes report until July 2008, after Monegan left the government. The DPS never informed me or my wife that Wooten had been disciplined.

[snip]

Monegan never informed me about the substance of any investigation that had been done. I was told no details could be released. I assumed nothing had been done or that whatever was done internally must have been a slap on the wrist. Col. Grimes never told me and Monegan never told me.

[snip]

Not until Wooten released, and then the ADN posted, his personnel records in July 2008 did I learn that there was a completed internal review by Col. Grimes and what was done. (3, 23)

Here's what Monegan told the NYT (which I assume matches his testimony to Branchflower).

On Jan. 4, 2007, a month into the Palin administration and his tenure as public safety commissioner, Mr. Monegan was called to the governor's Anchorage office to meet Todd Palin. Mr. Palin was seated at a conference table with three stacks of personnel files. That, Mr. Monegan recalled, was the first time he

heard the name Mike Wooten.

“He conveyed to me that he and Sarah did not think the investigation into Wooten had been done well enough and that they were not happy with the punishment,” Mr. Monegan said. “Todd was clearly frustrated.”

That is, not only did Monegan tell Todd the investigation was completed—but he told Todd what the punishment was. (See Halcro for his point on this earlier today.)

There’s a reason Todd repeats the claim that he didn’t learn of the results of the Grimes investigation until after Monegan was fired. Because so long as he can claim he didn’t know the results of the investigation, then he can (sort of) claim to have had a reason to nag Monegan so much—because he still believed it was an outstanding issue.

The question, of course, is whether or not Branchflower has proof that Monegan had already told Todd the results of the investigation. According to the NYT, the early instances of Monegan informing Sarah and Todd about the earlier investigation consisted of that face-to-face meeting and two phone calls.

A few days later, Mr. Monegan informed Mr. Palin that the issues raised at the meeting had been addressed in Mr. Wooten’s suspension. The case was closed.

[snip]

Several evenings later, Mr. Monegan’s cellphone rang. “Walt, it’s Sarah,” the governor said before echoing much of what her husband had said. Mr. Wooten, he recalls being told, was “not the kind of person we should want as a trooper.” He told the governor, too, that there was no new evidence to pursue.

Which raises the question—were these phone calls taped, as the phone call between Frank Bailey and Rodney Dial was taped?

But I think the real tell—where Todd Palin may be in a heap of trouble—is in this detail from the NYT story.

On Jan. 4, 2007, a month into the Palin administration and his tenure as public safety commissioner, Mr. Monegan was called to the governor's Anchorage office to meet Todd Palin. **Mr. Palin was seated at a conference table with three stacks of personnel files.** That, Mr. Monegan recalled, was the first time he heard the name Mike Wooten. [my emphasis]

Personnel files. The implication from this story is that Palin had Wooten's personnel file laying there on a table when he had this first meeting with Walt Monegan. Even in the phone call between Bailey and Dial, there's tension over whether Bailey—a government employee, after all—had accessed Wooten's personnel file. Bailey had suggested he got it through follow-up on the workers comp issue.

But this story suggests that Todd Palin—not a government employee—had gotten Wooten's personnel file in the first weeks of Sarah's tenure as governor. And that personnel file, of course, would have the details about the Grimes investigation.

If Branchflower has proof that Todd Palin got the personnel file—and that Palin's office got it without the excuse of the workers comp issue—then First Dude may be in a heap of trouble.