

# MONICA CONYERS PLEADS GUILTY

My biggest question for months was not whether or when Monica Conyers would accept a plea deal in a pay to play bribery scandal—as she did today. But whether or not her legal problems would make her husband, John Conyers, timid in his role as House Judiciary Chair.

*Monica Ann Conyers beginning on a date unknown and continuing until or about December 2007, did knowingly and voluntarily conspire and agree with an aide and others to corruptly solicit and demand for the benefit of herself and others and to accept and agree to accept things of value from persons while an agent of the City of Detroit, an entity that received more than \$10,000 in federal funding during the calendar year of 2007, with intent that Conyers would be influenced and rewarded in connection with any business transaction or series of transactions of a value of \$5,000 or more with the City of Detroit.*

*Overt acts: On Nov. 20, 2007, at approximately 3:15 p.m., Conyers met with an individual sent by Rayford Jackson in the parking lot at Butzel Family Center and received an envelope containing cash. On Dec. 4, 2007, at approximately 2:30 p.m., an individual sent by Rayford Jackson met Conyers and her aide in a McDonald's parking lot in Detroit at which time the individual delivered an envelope containing cash.*

The two bribes admittedly accepted by Conyers — on Nov. 20 and Dec. 4 2007 — bookended the Synagro vote, which was on Nov. 28 of that year.

The charging document reads: “The payments were made and received as part

of an agreement and understanding between defendant and Rayford Jackson ... to influence defendant to support the Synagro contract.”

After all, Monica Conyer’s crimes are more damning than Kwame’s mistress scandal was (though Kwame and his father are implicated in this as well). And it’s rather remarkable to have the Chair of the House committee overseeing justice to have his wife convicted of bribery.

So while I’ve never been a fan of Monica Conyers, I’ve been wondering how this impacts John Conyers. I’ve been wondering, for example, whether he’d step down or back off of his typical aggressiveness on corruption.

But I’m guessing, however, that Monica’s guilty plea gives Conyers the room to continue to target corruption. Which might explain yesterday’s HJC hearing on Deferred Prosecution Agreements—which targeted the Republican’s candidate for governor in NJ, Chris Christie. Yesterday’s hearing—which showed that Christie used the DPA program to benefit many of his friends with near-extortionist contracts—will do significant damage in Christie’s efforts to become governor.

It’s good to see that Monica’s problems haven’t stopped her husband from going after others’ corruption.