

THE \$46,000 QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF CHRIS CHRISTIE'S LOAN TO NJ'S FIRST AUSA?

New Jersey's PBS station, NJN, has just reported that Chris Christie, the former US Attorney with ties to Karl Rove, gave a loan of \$46,000 to the First AUSA in the NJ office, Michele Brown, for a mortgage. She will continue to pay him \$499 a month until 2017. When asked by NJN, Christie just explained that they were close friends and he helped her out of a financial pinch.

That's mighty interesting, for two reasons. First, there have been a slew of questions over the way a huge bust of 44 politicians—and some rabbis selling kidneys—last month shortly preceded a bunch of Christie campaign events touting his anti-corruption plan. That remarkable coincidence would be a whole lot easier to pull off if you had a very close relationship with the number two person in the US Attorney's office.

In addition, there have already been questions asked about her attendance at events that included a bunch of top NJ Republicans. (h/t brendan)

First Assistant U.S. Attorney **Michele Brown** was among the guests at a small social gathering held last Sunday at the Mendham home of Republican gubernatorial candidate **Christopher Christie**, but her attendance at the event – which was not political event though many of the attendees were Republican County Chairmen, legislators and campaign staffers – did not violate any federal law or regulation.

Brown was the Executive Assistant U.S.

Attorney and Christie's counsel before Acting U.S. Attorney **Ralph Marra, Jr.** elevated her to his old job as the number two in command of the federal prosecutor's office. A career prosecutor, she is a close personal friend of Christie and his wife, Mary Pat, and has been the U.S. Attorney's office for seventeen years.

Amid all the questions of whether or not Christie violated the Hatch Act with his discussions with Karl Rove about his race, it seems rather, um, curious that the woman he has given a significant loan to also has had questions about Hatch Act violations raised.

Update: A link with some more hard data.

As U.S. Attorney, Republican gubernatorial nominee Chris Christie gave high ranking staffer Michele Brown a \$46,000 mortgage loan that she continues to pay off, NJN reported in its news cast tonight.

The report by correspondent Zachary Fink, which is not yet available online, said that Brown has been paying Christie and his wife, Mary Pat, back in monthly increments of \$499.22 since taking the loan in October, 2007. She is scheduled to finish payments in 2017.

Christie told NJN that Brown, who was the office's fourth ranking staffer at the time of the loan and is now First Assistant U.S. Attorney – the number two spot under Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph Marra – asked for financial help after her husband lost his job while facing credit card debt.