

**WILL SARAH PALIN GO THE WAY OF SPIRO AGNEW?
TROOPERGATE MAY SPEED HER DEPARTURE**

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It kind of cracks me up. It is so far out of the realm of possibility and reality.

--Sarah Palin, on being a VP candidate, August 14, 2008

Jesus was community organizer, and Pontius Pilate was a governor

--Marilyn Trail, Moscow, Idaho

When Richard Nixon chose Spiro Agnew as his vice presidential candidate in 1968, people across the nation said "Spiro Who?" just as they said "Sarah Who?" when John McCain announced Palin as his running mate.

Palin is easily the most unvetted VP candidate since Agnew, and Jonathan Singer contends that both of them had "the two thinnest resumes of any major party vice presidential nominee since 1936."

Agnew was into his second term before a scandal forced him to resign in October, 1973. Palin already faces charges of abuse of power, and stonewalling on her part will most likely prevent a resolution before the election is held.

Both Palin and Agnew were little known less-than-two-year governors chosen to perform the political hatchet jobs handed out in all morally deficient political campaigns.

Just as McCain saw Palin as the answer to his lukewarm support from the Religious Right, Nixon thought that Agnew would be perfect for his "Southern Strategy," a successful attempt to convince many conservative Democrats to defect to the GOP.

Jeff Stein of *Spy Talk* says that, just like Palin, Agnew "was dropped onto the electorate like a torpedo with the single duty of blowing the Democrats out of the water, which he did with obvious relish."

Lexington of the *Economist* observes that "Nixon recognized that the Republicans stood to gain from "positive polarization": dividing the electorate over values. . . . Sarah Palin is a Nixonian fantasy come true."

Agnew, however, had better speech writers in his attack on America's liberal elites. William Safire and Pat Buchanan, whom Palin supported over McCain for president in 2000, gave Agnew these infamous alliterations: "nattering nabobs of negativism," "pusillanimous pussyfooters," and "hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history."

Earlier in the summer before she was brought from the bottom of the VP list to the top, Governor Palin agreed to cooperate fully with Alaska state investigators about the firing of Walt Monegan, Alaska's Public Safety Commissioner. At that time she said that she was "happy to comply, to cooperate" and that she should be held accountable. Palin claimed that there was no connection between her decision, which she said was based on Monegan's job performance, and pressure on him to fire Mike Wooten, a state trooper once married to Palin's sister.

Alaska's Legislative Council with 8 Republicans and 4 Democrats voted 12-0 to investigate "Troopergate," yet another tie to the Nixon presidency. (So much for the McCain campaign charge about a "Democratic attack" on Palin.) The Alaskan House and Senate Judiciary Committees voted (3-2 and 7-0) to issue subpoenas and 13 witnesses are on the list.

On August 30, the *Washington Post* reported that Palin's husband Todd "met with Monegan in January 2007 to say that [Wooten] was unfit for the force." Monegan tried to explain to Mr. Palin that he had investigated Wooten and that the case was closed. He also warned Mr. Palin that this could be construed as political interference in his duties as a state official.

The *Washington Post* also reported that Palin, even though she initially denied any contact, did finally "acknowledge that a half dozen members of her administration had made more than two dozen calls on the matter to various state officials."

On ABC News (9-15) Monegan said Palin brought up the Wooten issue in one meeting, two calls, and many e-mails, and he declared that she is "not telling the truth to the media about her reasons for firing me."

Todd Palin has refused to testify, even though he may face penalties of \$500 and six months in jail. The Alaska Legislature will not reconvene until January, so the witnesses can remain mum until the subpoenas are backed up with sanctions.

McCain campaign spokesman Ed O'Callaghan has declared that the witnesses can ignore legally issued subpoenas for another reason: namely, that the investigation is no longer legitimate. Since when do the opinions of political supporters overrule legislative mandates?

Alaska Republican Senate President Lyda Green has insisted that the investigation will continue. "The original purpose of the investigation was to bring out the truth. Nothing has changed."

Taking a page out of Bush administration legal dealings, Palin and her attorneys are now stonewalling on all fronts. In an attempt to avoid the legislative investigation, Palin earlier filed ethics charges against herself (Agnew tried the

same tactic), so that the case would move to an ethics board that she has filled with her own appointees. Now her attorneys are attempting to reverse that decision as well.

Palin is being touted as an ethical reformer who will clean up the nation's politics. Troopergate, however, has called all of this into question. As Monegan told ABC News: "I admire her intelligence and initiative. I wish I could respect her more for her integrity."

Nick Gier taught philosophy at the University of Idaho for 31 years. Read all of his election columns at www.home.roadrunner.com/~nickgier/Election08.htm.