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Karl Rove Indicted on Charges of Perjury, Lying to Investigators

By Jason Leopold

05/13/06 "t r u t h o u t" -- -- Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald spent more than half a day Friday at the offices of Patton Boggs, the law firm representing Karl Rove.

During the course of that meeting, Fitzgerald served attorneys for former Deputy White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove with an indictment charging the embattled White House official with perjury and lying to investigators related to his role in the CIA leak case, and instructed one of the attorneys to tell Rove that he has 24 hours to get his affairs in order, high level sources with direct knowledge of the meeting said Saturday morning.

Robert Luskin, Rove's attorney, did not return a call for comment. Sources said Fitzgerald was in Washington, DC, Friday and met with Luskin for about 15 hours to go over the charges against Rove, which include perjury and lying to investigators about how and when Rove discovered that Valerie Plame Wilson was a covert CIA operative and whether he shared that information with reporters, sources with direct knowledge of the meeting said.

It was still unknown Saturday whether Fitzgerald charged Rove with a more serious obstruction of justice charge. Sources close to the case said Friday that it appeared very likely that an obstruction charge against Rove would be included with charges of perjury and lying to investigators.

An announcement by Fitzgerald is expected to come this week, sources close to the case said. However, the day and time is unknown. Randall Samborn, a spokesman for the special prosecutor was unavailable for comment. In the past, Samborn said he could not comment on the case.

The grand jury hearing evidence in the Plame Wilson case met Friday on other matters while Fitzgerald spent the entire day at Luskin's office. The meeting was a

closely guarded secret and seems to have taken place without the knowledge of the media.

As TruthOut reported Friday evening, Rove told President Bush and Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten, as well as a few other high level administration officials, that he will be indicted in the CIA leak case and will immediately resign his White House job when the special counsel publicly announces the charges against him, according to sources.

Details of Rove's discussions with the president and Bolten have spread through the corridors of the White House, where low-level staffers and senior officials were trying to determine how the indictment would impact an administration that has been mired in a number of high-profile political scandals for nearly a year, said a half-dozen White House aides and two senior officials who work at the Republican National Committee.

Speaking on condition of anonymity Friday night, sources confirmed Rove's indictment was imminent. These individuals requested anonymity saying they were not authorized to speak publicly about Rove's situation. A spokesman in the White House press office said they would not comment on "wildly speculative rumors."

Rove's announcement to President Bush and Bolten comes more than a month after he alerted the new chief of staff to a meeting his attorney had with Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald in which Fitzgerald told Luskin that his case against Rove would soon be coming to a close and that he was leaning toward charging Rove with perjury, obstruction of justice and lying to investigators, according to sources close to the investigation.

A few weeks after he spoke with Fitzgerald, Luskin arranged for Rove to return to the grand jury for a fifth time to testify in hopes of fending off an indictment related to Rove's role in the CIA leak, sources said.

That meeting was followed almost immediately by an announcement by newly-appointed White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten of changes in the responsibilities of some White House officials, including Rove, who was stripped of his policy duties and would no longer hold the title of deputy White House chief of staff.

The White House said Rove would focus on the November elections and his change in status in no way reflected his fifth appearance before the grand jury or the possibility of an indictment.

But since Rove testified two weeks ago, the White House has been coordinating a response to what is sure to be the biggest political scandal it has faced thus far: the

loss of a key political operative who has been instrumental in shaping White House policy on a wide range of domestic issues.

Rove testified that he first found out about Plame Wilson from reading a newspaper report in July 2003 and only after the story was published did he share damaging information about her CIA status with other reporters.

However, evidence has surfaced during the course of the two-year-old investigation that shows Rove spoke with at least two reporters about Plame Wilson prior to the publication of the column.

The explanation Rove provided to the grand jury - that he was dealing with more urgent White House matters and therefore forgot - has not convinced Fitzgerald that Rove has been entirely truthful in his testimony and resulted in the indictment.

Some White House staffers said it's the uncertainty of Rove's status in the leak case that has made it difficult for the administration's domestic policy agenda and that the announcement of an indictment and Rove's subsequent resignation, while serious, would allow the administration to move forward on a wide range of issues.

"We need to start fresh and we can't do that with the uncertainty of Karl's case hanging over our heads," said one White House aide. "There's no doubt that it will be front page news if and when (an indictment) happens. But eventually it will become old news quickly. The key issue here is that the president or Mr. Bolten respond to the charges immediately, make a statement and then move on to other important policy issues and keep that as the main focus going forward."

Jason Leopold spent two years covering California's electricity crisis as Los Angeles bureau chief of Dow Jones Newswires. Jason has spent the last year cultivating sources close to the CIA leak investigation, and is a regular contributor to *t r u t h o u t*. He is the author of the new book *NEWS JUNKIE*. Visit www.newsjunkiebook.com for a preview.

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