
From: Wilkinson, Monty (OAG)
To: Grindler, Gary (OAG)
Sent: 4/8/2011 10:09:41 AM
Subject: FW: Media report quoting ATF emails re Grassley inquiries

From: Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG)
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 10:08 AM
To: Schmalzer, Tracy (SMO); Weiner, Robert (ODAG); Wilkinson, Monty (OAG); Richardson, Margaret (SMO)
Subject: Media report quoting ATF emails re Grassley inquiries

FYI

From: Gaston, Molly (SMO)
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 9:54 AM
To: Colborn, Paul P (SMO); Axelrod, Matthew (ODAG)
Cc: Burton, Faith (SMO)
Subject: RE: Latest version of Issa letter

FYI: <http://www.publicintegrity.org/blog/entry/3134/>

E-mails allege strife within ATF over Grassley probe

The Center for Public Integrity
April 8, 2011

By David Heath | April 8, 2011, 2:00 am
Updated: 4/7/2011, 7:06 pm |

An employee of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives alleged that he was “called to the carpet” by supervisors, accused of lying and ordered to write down everything that was said in meetings that were held with Senate staffers conducting an inquiry, according to newly released documents.

Staffers working for Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, met with ATF personnel as part of an investigation into an ATF sting operation that allowed straw purchasers to buy weapons that agents expected might be smuggled into Mexico.

One of the ATF employees complained after meeting with Grassley's staff that he had been harassed, according to e-mails released under the Freedom of Information Act. The e-mails reveal discussions within the agency on how to respond to Grassley's questions about the ATF operation, known as “Fast and Furious.”

According to an e-mail dated Jan. 31 and sent by an unidentified person to ATF deputy director William J. Hoover, Grassley's chief counsel warned ATF officials that they might be violating a law that protects government whistleblowers. Grassley was planning to talk about these concerns with Attorney General Eric Holder, according to the e-mails.

The ATF on Feb. 3 then drafted an email to be sent to employees, telling them that Grassley was asking questions.

“As always, you are in no way obligated to respond to congressional contacts or requests for information” that e-mail, said, noting that ATF agents were not authorized to reveal non-public information. However, the e-mail encouraged staff to report waste, fraud or abuse to their supervisors or the department's inspector general.