

## Kelli Park

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From: Gormley, Michael [MGORMLEY@ap.org]  
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2010 11:28 AM  
To: Peter Kauffmann  
Subject: weekend

Peter,

I am out of the office today, working some from home. You can reach me for sure on cell any time.

I am anticipating a Times story Saturday, which means it may or may not happen. Will you or someone else be available if you want to respond?

I expect we will want to do something, so this is a pretty certain request for comment.

On a personal note, thanks for hearing me out yesterday on the chaos of the last week or so. I was exhausted and stressed like I rarely have been before, as I'm sure you guys are. I thought from our lack of contact since Sunday that my story had done irreparable damage to my access to the communications director, a major, major problem for me.

That set me off because I try very hard to be fair and straight down the middle on this and every story.

That's why I never intended to send that draft. It was cathartic, but it was stream of consciousness stuff that got away from me when I was angry and as I see now that it was way overblown and dramatized. My point was to prove we did a fair story and the push and pull between reporters and editors is an effective and important part of that, all with the intent of being first, accurate and fair. I believe the result speaks for itself, although I know you and I differ on that.

For what it's worth, I now understand your point far better.

But I realize in trying to make the case for my efforts in that draft and to you and win back your trust, I took far more poetic license than was reality in describing the internal discussions. Sorry about that, unlike what I like to say about the accuracy of what I print, my email account was just wrong in tone and content. Reporters and editors have this tension that can seem nasty in the moment, good guys against bad guys, but it's never really that way. That's especially true here at the AP. We're all just trying to be right, and fast is good, too.

Please accept my apology for all of this.

Beers soon? We can talk about anything but politics.

..gormley

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## Kelli Park

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From: Gormley, Michael [MGORMLEY@ap.org]  
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 3:23 PM  
To: Peter Kauffmann  
Subject: FW: gormley weekend analysis

I'm sorry, Peter. After taking your phone call, I realized I must have miss-sent you a draft of an email on which I was working. Please see this one instead.  
Thanks.

Peter,

I understand your position. I know you're pissed. We live in a world in which a person everyone seems to agree is a good man is getting trashed like I've never seen and I know how you feel about the gov. We worked hard to do this right. I know you don't agree, but I also need to resume, if we can, our relationship of being able to call at any time on a story or, yes, even a rumor.

Here's how I see the Sunday night story we did and why I feel it was fair. This story was the cause of lots of tough discussions and even conflict for all journalists covering this in the LCA the last bunch of days.

The first graf talked about reelection plans, and notes unproven accusations.

The second graf is your campaign manager.

The third graf is a full quote from Richie Fife.

The fourth graf is the source, noting "unsubstantiated rumors," a redundancy I have insisted upon using to be clear to readers.

The fifth graf is the Post recap, with all the baggage that attribution good and bad that carries for readers; and the denial by the state police superintendent, which hadn't yet carried. That was from his letter to the editor to the Post.

The sixth graf is the superintendent extensive quote. Grafts 7-8 are you, with another quote.

Graf 9 is an academic questioning the whole rumor mess.

Grafts 10-11 are background, including the governor's unprecedented admission of past behavior to protect the job and New Yorkers.

Graft 12-13 gives readers motives that may be behind the rumors.

¶ ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. David Paterson met privately with key Democratic leaders about his re-election plans as questions swirl around the state capitol about a variety of unproven accusations involving the Democratic governor's personal conduct.

¶ Paterson campaign spokesman Richard Fife said the weekend meetings and calls had nothing to do with the accusations but were "routine re-election campaign calls."

¶ "The governor started making calls two weeks ago to step up his campaign effort and get ready to officially announce his re-election campaign," Fife said. "The calls were — and are — going well ... And then look what happens — a coordinated effort to stop him and spread rumors."

¶ A Democrat close to the situation, though, said the meetings included discussions about whether Paterson would resign or announce he will not run because of the unsubstantiated claims in the whisper campaign surrounding the governor's behavior. The Democrat spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

¶ One recent New York Post article about the accusations drew a denial by Paterson's spokeswoman and a strong rebuke by the superintendent of state police.

¶ "Perpetrating lies about the governor, his family and troopers who diligently perform their duties is a disservice to the citizens of New York," said state police Superintendent Harry J. Corbitt, a career trooper appointed to the top post by Paterson.

¶ A spokesman for the governor sharply criticized the crescendo of questions, rumors and accusations.

¶ "This is a new low even by the standards of Planet Albany," said Paterson spokesman Peter Kauffmann late Sunday. "The circus of the past week entirely fabricated out of thin air and innuendo is an embarrassment for all who have played a role in fueling it."

¶ "I've never seen the rumor of a story becoming the story as this one has," said Doug Muzzio, politics professor at New York City's Baruch College.

¶ Paterson became governor 23 months ago when Eliot Spitzer resigned amid a prostitution scandal. Paterson had been forced to confront allegations of sexual affairs and drug use since the day he rose to office on March 17, 2008. He held an extraordinary news conference detailing past affairs that he and his wife were involved in during an 18-month period when it appeared their marriage would end. He also recounted drug use from his youth.

¶ He said he made the admissions so he couldn't be compromised as governor and to avoid further fracturing a government rocked by Spitzer's resignation.

¶ Paterson already had plenty of conflict among his fellow Democrats. A week ago he vetoed an ethics bill adopted by the Democrat-controlled Legislature that was widely seen as essential this election year. Paterson says he wants a tougher bill.

¶ He also has refused to abandon his campaign for a full term, even as the far more popular and better-funded Andrew Cuomo, the attorney general, waits in the wings.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Peter Kauffmann [mailto:Peter.Kauffmann@chamber.state.ny.us]  
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2010 6:35 PM  
To: Gormley, Michael  
Subject: RE: gormley weekend analysis

Probably watching the Super Bowl as what seemed like a flurry of blog items were posted claiming he was about to resign -- prompting a legitimate news outlet (the Associated Press) to prepare to run a story about the phantom story.

-----Original Message-----

From: Gormley, Michael [mailto:MGORMLEY@ap.org]  
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2010 9:46 AM  
To: Peter Kauffmann  
Subject: gormley weekend analysis

Hi, Peter,

For a weekend analysis on Paterson's wins against the political/press complex as well as over the Legislature's attempt at an override on ethics (anything else you want to note?), was there any moment or anecdote inside that illustrated the governor's resolve, anger, feeling of isolation from Dems, or whatever regarding this fairly amazing week?

Thanks.

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From: Gormley, Michael [MGORMLEY@ap.org]  
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 9:43 AM  
To: Peter Kauffmann  
Subject: RE: gormley weekend analysis

Peter,

I understand your position. We live in a world in which a person everyone seems to agree is a good man is getting trashed like I've never seen. Nixon had far more support.

But the world is also messed up because of the fear/benefit of the tabloids. Every political entity says they hate the Post, but everyone caters to them at one time or another. Until that ends, there will always be a streak of tabloid in all Albany coverage.

But that doesn't make it right.

Between you and I \_ and I realize our relationship may be over \_ I will tell you what I shouldn't tell anyone.

On Sunday, as on Saturday and several days before, I reported out every rumor and found no proof of drugs or affairs. Every day, I told my editors I the tips ended in ``vapors,'' I word I kept using to emphasize the nothingness.

On Sunday, after 10 hours of reporting, a top editor decided they needed a story. He wanted a story that simply said, based on rumor he heard from a reporter who heard it from a tabloid reporter, that the governor was going to resign. He also said the same sourcing told him Shelly asked the governor to resign. I got back to him with facts that showed it wasn't true. It only slowed his assumption down.

I argued with several editors, all of whom wanted something. I had a sourced story on the conversations with legislators that they wanted to run in 15 minutes because it was late in the night. I, of course, said that wasn't enough time to give the governor's office fair treatment. I was told it was. You said give me 5 minutes, editors noted you went beyond your own deadline. I said that was bullshit, it's fairness over an incredibly important for a sitting governor.

(At this point it's important to note an very strict AP rule: No story can hit the wire with an anonymous source unless the writer's byline is on top.)

At 8 p.m., I was told by my boss that he would push the button on the anonymous source story at 8:15 p.m., with or without the governor's office on-the-record response. The editor said we would write it through when you give it to us, and he suspected you guys were intentionally delaying comment so it would end up on the wire too late for newspapers.

I again said bullshit.

At 8:13 p.m., without your comment on the record, I called and said I was pulling my byline on the one-sided, sourced story. Panic set in for the editors. At this point, my position as capitol editor and my AP career was threatened (such are the cut throat times in journalism today). I'm not asking for credit for this, it's a simple, basic duty of a journalist, one we've all done in our career.

You called back soon after and I slowly added your comment because you wanted Richie Fife or someone to provide the other half of it.

Please note the story that I blocked was: ``ALBANY \_ Gov. David Paterson is considering resigning amid persistent rumors about his personal behavior.'' That's the story that everyone was ready to do. I like to think, with some evidence, that my story cast serious doubt on the rumors for the first time, leading to balanced stories by the Buffalo News, Newsday and others. By Sunday, the option for responsible news outlets to avoid writing anything was gone or nearly gone.

So, the following story ran on the wire.

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The third graf is a full, killer quote from Richie Fife.

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Graf 9 is an academic questioning the whole rumor mess.

Grafs 10-11 are background, including the governor's unprecedented admission of past behavior to protect the job and New Yorkers.

Graf 12 gives readers a motive, naming legislators, for spreading the rumors.

Graf 13 is more motivation, naming Cuomo, and the governor's stand against it.

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