

Ex-aide testifies Christie laughed as Bridgegate was happening

NEW YORK POST

Ex-aide testifies Christie laughed as Bridgegate was happening

By Kaja Whitehouse and Kate Sheehy

September 27, 2016 | 11:59am



Gov. Chris Christie

AP

**MORE ON:
BRIDGEGATE**

Chris Christie won't face criminal charges in Bridgegate scandal

One of Chris Christie's closest pals revealed Tuesday that not only did the New Jersey governor know his lackies were snarling traffic around the George Washington Bridge to get back at one of his political foes — he had a big belly laugh about it.

<http://nypost.com/2016/09/27/ex-aide-testifies-christie-laughed-as-bridgegate-was-happening/>

Ex-aide testifies Christie laughed as Bridgewater was happening

**Christie wants judge to toss
Bridgewater citizen's
complaint**

**Trump's new political
director was a key figure in
Bridgewater**

**Ex-Christie aides convicted
in Bridgewater want new trial**

Blowing the lid off Christie's three years of statements that he was unaware of the plot, David Wildstein, the state's former No. 2 man at the Port Authority, for the first time publicly stated that the governor knew what was going on — and heartily condoned it.

Wildstein told a federal jury in Newark that the Republican governor guffawed at one point as he and PA boss Bill Baroni gleefully "bragged" to him about "the tremendous amount of traffic" they had just helped create in Fort Lee, whose mayor, Mark

Sokolich, had failed to endorse Christie's re-election.

The men yukked it up at a Sept. 11 memorial service at Ground Zero while thousands of motorists were trapped in hours-long delays — and Sokolich begged for relief, citing safety concerns — amid the arbitrary lane closures in 2013.

"Baroni said to Gov. Christie, 'There's a tremendous amount of traffic in Fort Lee this morning,'" Wildstein testified, noting that his PA boss was using "a sarcastic tone."

"You will be pleased to know that Mayor Sokolich is very frustrated because he can't get his telephone calls returned," Baroni added, according to Wildstein.

"[Christie] responded by saying that, 'I imagine he wouldn't be getting his phone calls returned,'" Wildstein said.

Baroni assured Christie, "I was monitoring the traffic, I was watching over everything," Wildstein said.

This prompted the governor to then refer to Wildstein by the "Wally Edge" pseudonym he used on his acerbic political website PolitckerNJ and snark, "I'm sure Mr. Edge would never do anything political," Wildstein told jurors.

"And he laughed," Wildstein said of Christie.

"I know I didn't say that," Christie said on NJ1015. "If they said to me there's traffic . . . Why would that matter to me?"

Ex-aide testifies Christie laughed as Bridgegate was happening

The government introduced photos of the three men chatting at the memorial as evidence, including some in which Christie is laughing.

Wildstein said he and Baroni later congratulated themselves on a job well done.

“Mr. Baroni and I discussed how pleased we were that the boss was happy,” he said. “Again, our one constituent being happy with us was very important to us.”

“I was happy that [Christie] was happy.”

Baroni and Christie’s former deputy chief of staff, Bridget Anne Kelly, are on trial on conspiracy and fraud charges for allegedly helping to orchestrate the scheme.

Wildstein, the admitted mastermind of the despicable plot, has already pleaded guilty.

Christie is not charged. He has repeatedly denied knowing anything about the plan beforehand, insisting that he only learned about it in the media weeks later.

On Tuesday, as his former pal was spilling the beans, the governor was still denying to reporters that he had any knowledge of the plot either before or as it occurred.

“All kinds of stuff is going on up in a courtroom in Newark. I want to be really clear: I have not and will not say anything different than I’ve been saying since January 2014. No matter what is said up there, I had no knowledge prior to or during these lane realignments,” Christie said, according to the Associated Press.

But Wildstein insisted that at the 9/11 memorial, Christie also instructed his Port Authority cronies to continue to ignore Sokolich, as well as the mayor of Jersey City, Steven Fulop, who also refused to endorse the governor’s re-election.

Earlier that summer, Baroni and Wildstein had received instructions from Christie staffers to stop interacting with Fulop, Wildstein said.

This practice was referred to as “radio silence,” Wildstein said.

The topic of Fulop came up after Port Authority Chairman David Samson later joined the trio’s conversation at the 9/11 anniversary event and mentioned to Christie that he had received a request to meet with Fulop, Wildstein said.

Ex-aide testifies Christie laughed as Bridgegate was happening

The topic of Fulop came up after Port Authority Chairman David Samson later joined the trio's conversation at the 9/11 anniversary event and mentioned to Christie that he had received a request to meet with Fulop, Wildstein said.

"Samson said to Gov. Christie, 'I have to meet with him. I'm the chairman of the Port Authority.'

"Gov. Christie said no," Wildstein said.

Christie told them that the Port Authority was "not to talk to" either Fulop or Sokolich, Wildstein said.

After word of the scheme began leaking, he sought the advice of pal Michael DuHaime, a GOP strategist and Christie adviser.

"DuHaime told me that Gov. Christie must have thought Mr. Baroni and I were joking around. He said Gov. Christie would not have thought of that as funny," Wildstein said.

Legal experts told The Post that Wildstein's testimony may prompt the public to ask why Christie wasn't charged.

But "it may be [prosecutors] have nothing other than this guy's testimony," said Manhattan lawyer **Vinoo Varghese**, referring to Wildstein. "For all we know, [Christie] may have thought it was a joke."

FILED UNDER BILL BARONI, BRIDGEGATE, CHRIS CHRISTIE, DAVID WILDSTEIN,
GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

READ NEXT **The terrifying standoff after a man is shot by police**
