

N.J. Governor scandal causes a whirlwind of controversy

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Cipel is still considering filing a lawsuit, according to Lowy. Kathy Ellis, a spokeswoman for McGreevey, called Lowy's version of the minutes leading up to the announcement "absolutely incorrect."

Who is Golan Cipel?

Did Cipel have an affair with McGreevey, or was he the victim of unwanted sexual advances?



N.J. Governor James McGreevey and wife Dina Matos McGreevey at the Aug. 10 press conference.

According to numerous wire reports, Cipel met McGreevey on one of the governor's trips to Israel. McGreevey would later appoint Cipel as New Jersey's \$110,000-a-year homeland security adviser in 2002, without a background check or official announcement. The appointment drew criticism, and Cipel was reassigned a few months later and soon after left the position for a job in New York.

Cipel has denied that he is gay.

"Never in my life have I had relations with a man, certainly not with this man who has come forward in the United States," Cipel said in a statement faxed to *The Associated Press*.

"I am a lone person fighting against a monstrous well-oiled machine of lies and manipulations operating in a methodical manner against me," Cipel said.

"I believe that in a few days new lies will emerge, even worse than before, lies and monstrous manipulations by the governor — paving the way for his lawyers ... all to threaten me and shut me up."

New tales did emerge — but they weren't from the governor.

On Aug. 18 the *N.Y. Post* printed an article with claims from a 47-year-old New Jersey doctor who said that he was an ex-lover of Cipel.

"I was with Golan when he wasn't with Jim," said Dr. Michael David Miller, who described his relationship with Cipel as sexual.

Miller's claims directly refuted the earlier statements from Cipel insisting that he is straight.

In the *Post* interview Miller said he had no doubt that Cipel is gay.

"He's gay. So what?" said Miller.

Miller added that Cipel had been involved in at least three other relationships with men "that I know of."

An emergency-room doctor, Miller said he met Cipel at a fundraiser for McGreevey in 2001. "His interest in monetary affairs was strange," said Miller.

"Out on a date, he would ask me how much money I have, how many properties I own. We were out for a pleasant evening and to have sex. It took away from the moment. Conversations with him always ended up with money."

He also said he thought Cipel was threatening to sue McGreevey because the governor had jilted him.

"Do you know what a jilted lover is?" he asked. "Jim jilted him."

But Miller didn't stop there with his negative characterizations of Cipel.

"Golan did something so hateful in Jewish society and so hateful in the gay community that I was shocked," Miller said. "I wouldn't be surprised if the Republican Party paid him a tidy sum of money to do this. Because what Golan likes is money."

Cipel is now in Israel, and says he plans to return, but Miller is skeptical of that claim.

He says Cipel fled the country "because he was scared when he learned there was a federal investigation into extortion."

On Aug. 18 Cipel once again fired back. "I never had any relationship with any man, so I don't know what they want from me," he told a close friend who spoke with the press. Cipel called Miller's tale "ridiculous and laughable," and said it was now open season on him — "anyone can get up now and claim he had an affair."

The story continues to develop as allegations against McGreevey indicate possible abuse of his position when he appointed Cipel to the Homeland Security position, despite the fact former FBI Director Louis Freeh was actively pursuing the job.

Freeh had even offered to serve McGreevey without a salary, the *Newark Star-Ledger* reported.

A gay victory or major disappointment?

Although activists in the LGBT community were excited that McGreevey's admission meant that the U.S. now had its first gay governor, their enthusiasm was tem-

pered by his upcoming resignation.

"I'm not shocked about the fact that he has come out as a gay man; that was always my suspicion that he was a closeted case," said Anahi Galante, founder of a New Jersey gay advocacy organization, United in Grace LGBT. She also noted that McGreevey's opposition to gay marriage but favor of domestic partnerships seemed to shed light on his secret.

"For me, it would have been a true victory if he would have come out and not resigned."

Steven Goldstein, chairman of Garden State Equality, a statewide gay advocacy organization, said he was "in tears" watching McGreevey's televised speech.

"This speech hit me far more as a gay person than it does as a political activist," Goldstein said. "There are millions of lesbians and gay citizens of America who know how very hard it is to come out as an openly lesbian or gay person, but to have to do so in such a public fashion like this, I cannot even imagine what the governor has gone through."

Although McGreevey insists he's not going anywhere until Nov. 15, Republicans

and even a handful of Democrats are calling for him to resign immediately.

Joe Kyrillos, chairman of the New Jersey Republican State Committee, called on McGreevey to "do the right thing" and step down right away.

Providing McGreevey resigns on Nov. 15, N.J. Senate President Richard J. Codey, a Democrat, will become acting governor and serve out the remainder of McGreevey's term, which ends in early 2006. If McGreevey were to leave office before Sept. 3, a special election would be held.

Despite admonishments from N.J. Republicans, the state is largely Democratic and the Republican voter base is extremely splintered. There are no Republicans who have announced their desire to vie for the position — though some Democrats have voiced their support for Sen. Jon Corzine. Corzine says he is "leaving the door open" to running in a special election to finish McGreevey's term only if McGreevey makes the decision to leave sooner.

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