

DOJ CHARGES FORMER CIA OFFICER FOR EXPOSING CIA'S TORTURE

It would be too simple to say that Jon Kiriakou was a whistle-blower. His initial leaks to journalists seemed like sanctioned leaks to minimize the effect torture had.

But whatever role he played, DOJ just charged him for leaking information—almost certainly about the Abu Zubaydah torture—to journalists.

A former CIA officer, John Kiriakou, was charged today with repeatedly disclosing classified information to journalists, including the name of a covert CIA officer and information revealing the role of another CIA employee in classified activities, Justice Department officials announced.

The charges result from an investigation that was triggered by a classified defense filing in January 2009, which contained classified information the defense had not been given through official government channels, and, in part, by the discovery in the spring of 2009 of photographs of certain government employees and contractors in the materials of high-value detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The investigation revealed that on multiple occasions, one of the journalists to whom Kiriakou is alleged to have illegally disclosed classified information, in turn, disclosed that information to a defense team investigator, and that this information was reflected in the classified defense filing and enabled the defense team to take or obtain surveillance photographs of government

personnel. There are no allegations of criminal activity by any members of the defense team for the detainees.

I'll have more shortly. But one thing to remember is that Lanny Breuer represented Kiriakou in the two years leading up to 2009. And Patrick Fitzgerald is the prosecutor on this case.

Update: Here's the NYT story cited in the press release. It's a Scott Shane article on Deuce Martinez.

Update: Here's one detail Kiriakou is alleged to have leaked (the quote is from the Shane story).

Armed with Abu Zubaydah's cellphone number, eavesdropping specialists deployed what some called **the "magic box," an electronic scanner that could track any switched-on mobile phone and give its approximate location.** But Abu Zubaydah was careful about security: he turned his phone on only briefly to collect messages, not long enough for his trackers to get a fix on his whereabouts. [my emphasis]

First of all, this information was readily available—they will have an interesting time proving this was classified. But I find it particularly ironic given the Jones decision that came down today.

Update: I've corrected the title and text to indicate that Kiriakou was charged, but not yet indicted.