

# SHOULD EXECUTIVES THAT SUBORN PERJURY GET SPECIAL FAVORS?

In my opinion, the key lines from Judith Regan's suit against the News Corp are these:

The complaint charges that one unnamed senior News Corp. executive "counseled Regan to lie and withhold information from investigators" about her acknowledged affair with former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik. Another unnamed News Corp. executive "advised Regan not to produce clearly relevant documents in connection with a governmental investigation of Kerik," according to the complaint.

Regan basically accuses two of Rupert's executives of suborning perjury. But, she doesn't provide their names. Yet. At the same time, she asks for \$100 million to go away quietly.

That sure looks like a suit that will get settled quietly—at least it will if the executives in question are people Rupert would like to keep around. (**Update:** bmaz watches teevee so I don't have to ... and reveals one of these alleged suborners is ... Roger Ailes. Yeah. I agree with bmaz—Rupert probably would like to keep Ailes around.)

That may be what happens—but it certainly begs further discussion, not least because Cathie Martin's husband just proposed doing Rupert a huge favor. You see, News Corp is one of two intended beneficiaries (the other is the Tribune Company) of FCC Commissioner Kevin Martin's proposal to eliminate the rule prohibiting ownership of a TV station and a newspaper in the same market.

Chairman Martin proposes the Commission

amend the 32-year-old absolute ban on newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership by crafting an approach that would allow a newspaper to own one television station or one radio station but only in the very largest markets and subject to certain criteria and limitations.

News Corp and Tribune already break the rule; they're operating with waivers from the FCC. If Martin's proposal were to become law, it would free them to establish TV-newspaper pairs in further cities.

As freepress.net's post on this points out, the entire process by which Martin has been "considering" this plan has been utterly corrupt.

The entire process leading to Tuesday's announcement has been a study in government corruption 101. Biased research, flawed data and unfair timelines from the FCC have consistently pushed the public out of the policymaking process and ignored citizens' impassioned pleas against further media consolidation.

To give a big gift to News Corp—at a time when its executives are being accused of serious intrusions into a criminal investigation—would only pile up the corruption.

But perhaps the biggest reason that Regan's allegations should require Martin to pause before ramming through this deal comes from his own maudlin op-ed supporting the proposal. You see, Martin's editorial talks naively of "editorial independence."

In addition, each part of the combined entity would need to maintain its editorial independence.

If what Regan alleges is true (and she says she

has recordings of the conversations), it mocks the very notion of editorial independence. Here's a company that—at a corporate level—is intruding on the editorial independence of one of its properties. Yet Kevin Martin thinks that, in spite of that clear evidence that no one within the News Corp empire has editorial independence, Rupert can be trusted to grant it as he further expands his empire?