

FIREWALL, THE SEQUEL

Along with deleting emails and trolling for sex partners in public places, another favorite activity of Bush era Republicans is establishing legal defense funds. And AGAG will not be left out of the fun.

Supporters of former attorney general Alberto R. Gonzales have created a trust fund to help pay for his legal expenses, which are mounting in the face of an ongoing Justice Department investigation into whether Gonzales committed perjury or improperly tampered with a congressional witness.

Now, the most delicious detail from this story is the suggestion that AGAG does indeed expect ongoing investigation.

Leitch also wrote that Gonzales's attorney, George J. Terwilliger III of White & Case in Washington, "has substantially reduced his fee to represent Al Gonzales, **but the costs will likely be high nonetheless.**" A contribution form asking for donations to the Alberto R. Gonzales Legal Expense Trust suggests amounts from \$500 to \$5,000. [my emphasis]

In other words, Terwilliger's services include more than just negotiating one appearance before IG Glenn Fine.

But what really troubles me about Legal Defense Fund, the Sequel is that it, like Scooter Libby's Defense Fund, will likely remain anonymous. At least fund President David Leitch isn't providing any details.

[Leitch] declined to provide details about the trust, such as whether Gonzales played a role or how much money has been donated so far.

Now, I've had this argument on this site before. But it seems to me that the legal defense funds for public figures who clearly are gatekeepers to a much wider scandal must be public. Gonzales, like Libby, may well be protecting the President (which might explain why Bush had such kind words for Gonzales yesterday), and he's certainly protecting Karl Rove. And with the Scooter Libby Defense Fund, at least, several people implicated in the crimes for which Libby served as the firewall donated to the fund and wrote letters in favor of leniency (in the first case, James Woolsey and Mel Sembler; in the second, Mary Matalin and Eric Edelman). Citizens deserve to know if the President's sugar daddies are paying for a legal firewall to protect the President.