

MORE INTRIGUING THAN A BOY-FOR-HIRE

There was a rumor floating the Toobz yesterday that Trent Lott got out of the Senate in a hurry because of boy trouble—perhaps something that Larry Flynt dug up. That rumor has since been denied by the boy in question.

But Scott Horton points us to something that is rather more intriguing: The fact that Trent's brother-in-law's law office is presently being raided.

Sources in Mississippi law enforcement inform No Comment that FBI agents are now raiding the law office of Richard "Dickie" Scruggs in Oxford.

Horton has covered the non-indictment of Dickie Scruggs before. You see, Scruggs was the apparent mastermind of a plan behind loans to some Mississippi judges—loans for which Democratic lawyer Paul Minor is now doing time.

As Minor recounts it, and other lawyers with whom I spoke confirm, the idea of rushing in to support the judges who came under fire from the Chamber of Commerce started with Richard Scruggs, probably the best known and wealthiest member of the Mississippi trial lawyers bar. Scruggs, like Minor, made loans to Mississippi judges and came under investigation in the original study launched by the FBI. However, there was a critical difference. Scruggs tends to support the Republicans, not the Democrats. In 2000, for instance, he gave \$250,000 to the Bush-Cheney campaign and to the G.O.P., and only \$20,000 to Democratic candidates. And more significantly, Scruggs was the brother-in-law of Mississippi Senator Trent Lott, who at the time was the

Republican leader in the U.S. Senate.

If the conduct that Minor engaged in was unlawful, then Scruggs should also have been charged. Indeed, an outsider looking over the file would come pretty quickly to expect to see Scruggs as the lead defendant in the case. But that's not the way U.S. Attorney Lampton and Public Integrity section head Noel Hillman saw things, and several people who have asked to remain anonymous have told me that that Lott was aggressive in acting to protect Scruggs.

Well, I gotta say, it'd be awfully encouraging if, just weeks after Michael Mukasey started as AG, what appears to have been another politicized prosecution was addressed.

It certainly raises questions, though, about what else might be out there.