

# IMMUNITY

I'm all in favor of holding the several people in the White House who intervened to destroy evidence responsible for their actions: I expect Steven Cambone, Rummy, David Addington, Alberto Gonzales, and probably Cheney deserve the heat for destroying the torture tapes.

But as we begin to hear about Jose Rodriguez considering immunity...

THE CIA chief who ordered the destruction of secret videotapes recording the harsh interrogation of two top Al-Qaeda suspects has indicated he may seek immunity from prosecution in exchange for testifying before the House intelligence committee.

Jose Rodriguez, former head of the CIA's clandestine service, is determined not to become the fall guy in the controversy over the CIA's use of torture, according to intelligence sources.

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The House intelligence committee has subpoenaed Rodriguez to appear for a hearing on January 16. Last week the CIA began opening its files to congressional investigators. Silvestre Reyes, a Democrat who is chairing the committee, has said he was "not looking for scapegoats" – a hint to Rodriguez that he would like him to talk.

... it might be well to remember what I pointed out when Rodriguez was first floating the idea of immunity.

The article also includes a clear signal from the masterful press manipulator, Bob Bennett, that he intends to advise his client ~~John~~ Jose Rodriguez to plead the Fifth.

Bennett told NEWSWEEK that his client had been "a dedicated and loyal public servant for 31 years" and "has done nothing wrong." But he warned that Rodriguez may refuse to cooperate with investigators if he concludes that the probes are a "witch hunt." "I don't want him to become a scapegoat."

In case you missed it, Bennett uses the same phrase Monica Goodling's lawyer, John Dowd, used, "witch hunts," just before he snookered Congress into offering her immunity for a bunch of stuff that Congress already had evidence she was doing. As a reminder, Monica said almost nothing that incriminated Rove or Harriet and only sort of incriminated AGAG. But she managed to get herself immunity for "crossing the line" and politicizing DOJ's hiring practices. Bennett's use of precisely same language as Monica's lawyer may be no accident.

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Which is, frankly, about the only reason Michael Mukasey is correct in asking the House Intelligence Committee to back off. Crazy Pete Hoekstra is pretty close to Porter Goss, who appears to know more about the destruction of the torture tapes than he is letting on. And I could see Hoekstra doing the same favors—of impeding an investigation by manipulating the less than crafty chair of the House Intelligence Committee—that Dick Cheney did when he was in the same position during Iran-Contra. In other words, I'm not sure we can trust Crazy Pete to want to get to the bottom of this, and if HPSCI starts offering immunity as incautiously as they did with Monica, then I worry their

investigation will stall any real investigation by DOJ—if it exists.

That is, in the hands of a less than shrewd majority and a politically reliable minority leader, immunity can be counter-productive. In the case of Monica Goodling, the Dems basically gave Monica a get out of jail card for nothing in exchange. Until I see that Crazy Pete Hoekstra's heart is in the right place on this issue (which would, frankly, astound me), then I'd suggest we want to be very careful before we give Rodriguez something for nothing.