

# THEY REALLY DON'T WANT US LEARNING ABOUT THE TORTURE TAPES, DO THEY?

I noted several weeks ago that Bob Bennett sounded an awful lot like he was beginning to float excuses for his client, Jose Rodriguez, to ask for immunity before he testified before Congress.

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.

Well, surprise, surprise! Bennett just told Congress he wants Rodriguez to receive immunity before he'll testify before Congress (h/t maryo2).

Attorneys for Jose Rodriguez told Congress that the former CIA official won't testify about the destruction of CIA videotapes without a promise of immunity, a person close to the tapes inquiry said Wednesday.

[snip]

Defense attorney Robert Bennett told lawmakers, however, that he would not let Rodriguez testify because of the criminal investigation into the case. Without a promise of immunity, anything Rodriguez said at the hearing could be used against him in court.

Of course, Bennett's excuse has changed. Rather than use the tired excuse Monica Goodling used—she was the "victim" of a witchhunt—Bennett is using the even more tired Iran-Contra era excuse that, um, maybe Congress can get his client out of all criminal liability if Bennett pulls a fast one ... ? But honest, Bennett's not worried about any real criminal liability, nosiree.

Meanwhile, Judge Mark Kennedy has decided he trusts DOJ a lot more than Judge Mark Wolf does, and he doesn't see the need to conduct an inquiry into why the CIA was destroying tapes that might have been relevant to cases before him.

U.S. District Judge Henry H. Kennedy Jr. said in a three-page ruling in Washington that a group of inmates being held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "offer nothing to support their assertion that a judicial inquiry" is necessary into the tape destruction. He said neither of the detainees whose interrogations were taped and later destroyed has an

apparent connection to the prisoners who were demanding the review.

Kennedy also wrote that he expects the Justice Department "will follow the facts wherever they may lead and live up to the assurances it made to this court."

So, let's see. No Rodriguez testimony before Congress (hopefully, that is ... did you know that Non CIA Rat is almost an anagram for Iran-Contra?), no Kennedy inquiry into the terror tapes. That DOJ investigation into the torture tapes is looking like a pretty good way to bury any discussion of the torture tapes for a good little while, isn't it? Maybe even long enough for Bush to start pardoning people wildly in about a year, huh?