

CHENEY'S LAWYER NOW DEFENDING HAYNES

We've discussed the quiet omnipresence of Terry O'Donnell on this blog several times before. O'Donnell is, of course, Dick Cheney's long-time personal lawyer. We know that David Addington informed Cheney when he discovered the "meatgrinder" note in the evidence being turned over to the FBI in the CIA Leak Case. We also know that O'Donnell took the lead on efforts to convince DOJ not to indict James Tobin—even though O'Donnell was not one of the named Williams & Connolly lawyers representing Tobin.

If the Tobin example didn't already make it clear that O'Donnell's job is not just to keep Cheney—but to keep the entire top Bush Administration out of jail—consider this news.

Terry O'Donnell is now representing the former General Counsel for DOD, William Haynes.

The panel notified the Pentagon in early February that it wanted to question Haynes. Before receiving any response, investigators learned on Feb. 25 that Haynes was leaving for Chevron in San Francisco. "How often does somebody like that give two weeks' notice and leave town?" said one government source familiar with the sequence of events.

Haynes's departure initially raised concerns about obtaining his testimony without a subpoena, especially after the panel learned that he had retained top criminal defense attorney Terrence O'Donnell, who represented Cheney during the Valerie Plame leak investigation. But O'Donnell told NEWSWEEK that Haynes has agreed to be interviewed, adding that the committee's probe "had nothing to do" with his resignation.

This mind-boggling news appears in an Isikoff

story about a secret Senate Armed Forces investigation into abuses of detainees in DOD custody (recall that Carl Levin Chairs Armed Forces and John McCain is the ranking member—which itself is cause for discussion).

Not surprisingly, Isikoff doesn't bat an eye about the fact that the Vice President's personal lawyer is now representing the guy at DOD who is at the nexus of policies permitting torture, the guy who stands between the policies at Abu Ghraib and Gitmo, and Rummy and Dick. Isikoff doesn't consider the tremendous conflict that O'Donnell is likely to have, representing both the legal facilitator of the torture and the mastermind of the whole damned Unitary Executive itself.

Once again, this Administration appears to be defending itself as a collectivity. And once again, it appears that Dick has himself well-insulated from his own illegal actions.

Update

Alright. I've got to hit two more things that I find to be mind-boggling about this.

First, I take solace that this investigation is being done at Armed Forces. Carl Levin has none of the gelatinous character that Jay Rockefeller has—so I'm glad that he's leading the investigation rather than Levin's colleague at SSCI. But consider what it means that John McCain—the guy who led the limited reveal investigation of Jack Abramoff—is the Ranking Member on this committee. At the very least, this investigation should not be conducted under the veil of secrecy.

Second, consider Terry O'Donnell's own resume. O'Donnell and Dick go back to the Nixon Administration together. But they really got chummy when O'Donnell himself was General Counsel of DOD when Dick was Secretary of Defense. That makes all of these relationships: Dick to O'Donnell his former GC, Dick to O'Donnell his personal lawyer, O'Donnell to Haynes, his successor as Republican DOD GC, Dick

to Rummy to O'Donnell to Haynes almost too close
to fathom.

Update: Dick's resume corrected per Bushie.