

PARDON WATCH: THE BETTING POOL

I can't tell you how many times I started this post—an open thread for predictions of who, how many, how explicit the crimes that Bush would pardon. But every time I started the post, I deleted it—thinking it was unseemly to start Pardon Watch this early (though, admittedly, a full year after Libby's commutation kicked off the self-protective pardon-fest).

But now Charlie Savage has broached the subject. And Dan Froomkin piled on, too, noting the vile Victoria Toensing calling for pre-emptive pardons of any and all long-term investigations:

'The president should pre-empt any long-term investigations,' said Victoria Toensing, who was a Justice Department counterterrorism official in the Reagan administration. 'If we don't protect these people who are proceeding in good faith, no one will ever take chances.'

(I guess Victoria doesn't have much faith in McCain's ability to win this election...)

So I hereby kick off a once-monthly post calling for predictions on how many Get Out of Jail So You Can Keep Me Out of Jail Free cards Bush issues. Plus one for Roger Clemons, because Bush is a baseball guy...

We'll give out five hub-caps, one for the most accurate guess each month. bmaz—I'm adding five hubcaps onto your normal football requisition.

Here are my current predictions and Bush's likely logic behind each:

- Karl Rove—a vague pardon for any and all crimes committed during the Bush Administration, with an

added "Official Duties" claim to give him qualified immunity against the lawsuits

- Scooter Libby, because outing a CIA NOC on the Vice President's order shouldn't be criminal
- John Yoo, because a President really ought to be able to crush the testicles of a person's child
- Brent Wilkes (to protect Dusty Foggo) but not Duke Cunningham (because he's a snitch)
- Jose Rodriguez, since the torture portrayed on the torture tapes was ordered by Bush before the relevant opinions were written
- Alberto Gonzales, so Bush can return the favor of when Gonzales cleansed his drunk driving records in the past
- Steven Griles, because the oil companies really need to be able to rip off American taxpayers to be competitive
- Bandar Bush bin Sultan, because it will be a lucrative business move in the long run and because I can assure you the Bush family doesn't want you to learn about the covert ops the Saudis were doing with

money laundered through
defense contract deals
▪ Roger Clemens, because Bush
is a baseball guy

That's it for me for this year's predictions—a relatively modest list, I think. No Cheney, no Addington (I think both would consider it an indignity to be pardoned by someone like Bush). No Abramoff, because he's a snitch. No Jeff Skilling (because he hasn't be donating to the Republican party of late). None of the legislators (Stevens, Doolittle, Renzi, and the rest of the Abramoff crowd), because it would "taint" Bush's legacy.

Who am I missing?