

THEY'RE SCARED

I'm watching the HJC hearing on politicized prosecutions. And boy, have the Republicans come loaded for bear, on two counts. First, the Republicans attempted to insinuate that Jill Simpson's allegations about the Don Siegelman prosecution must be false because she did not testify publicly today. Congressman Forbes repeated a tactic Republicans used when Valerie Wilson testified before Waxman's committee—suggesting that Simpson "be referred" to DOJ for investigation.Â Congressman Davis rebutted Forbes' allegations, pointing out that Forbes was wrong when he alleged that Simpson's affidavit had no proof.

In particular, Davis focused on the affidavits from Rob Riley and two others, which the committee just received today. I expect we'll get those affidavits in the near future. But on one count, it's clear that the affidavits are rebutted by the facts: all three Alabama Republicans claim there was no phone conference at which Simpson heard politicized discussions about Siegelman. Yet Simpson's phone records prove that there was such a call, involving at least Rob Riley.

The other line of attack the Republicans pursued was to attack Dick Thornburgh (who testified that one of the cases Mary Beth Buchanan pursued was irregular). Congressman Cannon spent all of his time haranguing Thornburgh, repeatedly saying that the sole reason the cameras were at the hearing today was that he was there, a Republican ex-Attorney General. Further, Republicans repeatedly insinuated that Thornburgh was simply trying to win a case.

On the Thornburgh case, it's worth remembering that he and Rove have a history. Rove sued Thornburgh to get paid for campaign work he did in 1991 when Thornburgh had run to replace John Heinz. The case went all the way to the Fifth Circuit and Thornburgh had to pay \$310,000 to Rove. The lesson the book *Bush's Brain* takes

from the Thornburgh-Rove conflict was:

█ Don't mess with Karl Rove.

It appears that the few Republicans who are representing their side in this hearing are trying to follow that rule themselves.