

# SCOTT BLOCH COPS A PLEA FOR BLOCHING JUSTICE

You might remember our old friend Scott Bloch, the former head of the United States Office of Special Counsel under the Bush/Cheney Administration. The OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the Federal merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing. You might also remember Bloch was the one David Iglesias was sure could unravel the US Attorney Purgegate and nail Karl Rove. That didn't work out so well, and then Bloch got in hot water himself for purging his own computers with the pros from "Geeks on Call" performing a "seven level wipe" for him.

Well, to make a long story short, it appears Lady Justice has finally caught up to the intrepid BlochHead. From the Washington Post:

Scott J. Bloch, the former director of a federal office in charge of helping shield government whistleblowers from unfair treatment, plans to plead guilty to withholding information from congressional investigators after he had his office computer files professionally deleted in 2006.

U.S. prosecutors filed papers in federal court Thursday that accuse Bloch, who led the Office of Special Counsel through much of President George W. Bush's administration, of failing to truthfully answer questions about whether he arranged for private computer technicians to "scrub" his office computer and that of other political appointees. This type of filing, known as an information, is made public when a suspect is about to plead guilty to the allegations.

Bloch came under criticism early in his tenure as special counsel for ordering all mention of workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation be removed from OSC's Web site and printed materials. Bloch stated his office lacked the authority to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

He was abruptly removed from his post and barred from returning to his office in October 2008 after a meeting with White House officials.

The root here is Bloch is to plea to withholding information about his computer scrape from the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. A criminal information was filed today, and that means his change of plea to guilty is on the immediate horizon, very possibly tomorrow. Here is the AP version of the story.

Hilariously enough, Bloch's troubles began when someone *blew the whistle on him*; from a February 2007 Washington Post article:

A trouble-plagued whistle-blower investigation at the Office of Special Counsel – whose duties include shielding federal whistle-blowers – hit another snag this week when employees accused the special counsel of intimidation in the probe.

The Office of Personnel Management's inspector general has been investigating allegations by current and former OSC employees that Special Counsel Scott J. Bloch retaliated against underlings who disagreed with his policies – by, among other means, transferring them out of state – and tossed out legitimate whistle-blower cases to reduce the office backlog. Bloch denies the accusations, saying that under his leadership the agency has grown more

efficient and receptive to whistle-blowers.

The probe is the most serious of many problems at the agency since Bloch, a Kansas lawyer who served at the Justice Department's Task Force for Faith-based and Community Initiatives, was appointed by President Bush three years ago. Since he took the helm in 2004, staffers at the OSC, a small agency of about 100 lawyers and investigators, have accused him of a range of offenses, from having an anti-gay bias to criticizing employees for wearing short skirts and tight pants to work.

At any rate, the continuing saga of Bungalow Bloch appears to be nearing an end. Oh well, another name to the Bush Administration convict list and another update of Hugh's Bush Scandal List needed.