

**THE BLOG**

We Are All Harry Whittington

By Marty Kaplan

02/14/2006 01:42 pm ET | Updated May 25, 2011

No sooner had the White House decided that the best strategy to deal with Cheney's Chappaquiddick was to make self-deprecating jokes about it than his Texas hospital inconveniently revealed that birdshot in Harry Whittington's body had migrated to his heart and caused atrial fib — turns out he had a heart attack. He's back in the ICU. Worse, there's no reason that other shot can't now migrate into additional internal organs.

Does this mean ix-nay on the jokes, Scottie?

Now that the White House press corps has learned firsthand what Pat Leahy must have felt like to get the full Cheney treatment, Harry Whittington's predicament threatens to become a metaphor of what's happened to America under Bush/Cheney. Profound injury has been inflicted on us. The damage could worsen at any moment. And the only response from those responsible is silence, arrogance and misdirection. With their short-lived comedy offensive in disarray, how long do you think it will be before they return to tried-and-true 9/11 fearmongering?

UPDATE: Turns out that Scottie knew about the heart attack *before* doing his White House press corps briefing today. He later explained that he didn't mention it at the time because it was more appropriate for that information to be released later on by, um — hey, how 'bout those Longhorns, huh?

UPDATE 2: That distinguished gentleman, Senator Norm Coleman, just told Wolf that — instead of fighting about how the White House was handling this thing — what we should all be doing is feeling sympathetic toward the Vice President, on account of what a heavy "burden" he must be feeling after what happened.

UPDATE 3: PAGING DR. FRIST! PAGING DR FRIST! Could a superficially implanted pellet, traveling through hunting clothes, actually have migrated into the patient's heart? Or was the gun closer to the victim than we've been led to believe? Only one person is qualified to make the long-distance diagnosis. Mr. Majority Leader, a nation turns its lonely eyes to you.

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