

**THE BLOG**

O Harriet! My Harriet!

By Marty Kaplan

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Maybe the reason was the Fox poll documenting Bush's approval rating's official arrival in the toilet, but whatever the cause, the canaries in the White House inner circle have certainly begun to sing.

A fresh New York Times piece about the deck-chair brigade is festooned with people "granted anonymity to talk openly about sensitive internal White House deliberations," people "granted anonymity to get around the administration's policy of not commenting on personnel matters," even people "with knowledge of [Tony Snow's] deliberations [to replace Scott McClellan] who spoke on condition of anonymity because they did not want to upset private discussions at a sensitive time" — as though taking an anonymous piss would actually be a less upsetting kind of leak.

The most toxic whisper concerns White House counsel Harriet Miers: Chief of Staff Josh "Bolten is said by a number of Republicans in Washington to feel that Ms. Miers is indecisive, a weak manager and slow in moving vital paperwork through the system."

You will recall, children, that President Bush not long ago pronounced Harriet Miers the very bestest person in the whole wide world to serve as a Justice of the Supreme Court. Now I don't know how much of her time on the bench she might have had to spend managing her clerks, or how much personal attention she would've needed to devote to circulating those pesky draft opinions from one Justice's chambers to another's.

But indecisive? Isn't deciding things the, um, job of a Supreme Court justice?

Now presumably Ms. Miers did not acquire her indecisiveness overnight. In other words, we are belatedly learning the inside scoop, acknowledged widely, if anonymously, by Republicans, about her fatal disqualification for office back on the very day Bush nominated her. Turns out she isn't even decisive enough to be White House counsel; Bolten wants to can her. How hard could it be to say yes to torture and wiretapping?

Who's next to be outed by insiders? It would be a pity to have to wait until Bush and Scottie are reminiscing about the good old days from rocking chairs in Crawford to learn that a number of Republicans and White House staffers believe — right now, today — that Rumsfeld is a deranged monomaniac, that Cheney is a demented jackal, or that Condi is a pathological sycophant.

I'm speaking only hypothetically, of course.