

**THE BLOG****Corruption Do's & Don'ts**

By Marty Kaplan

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House Speaker Dennis Hastert wants members “to understand the nuances of House rules,” said his spokesman, explaining why Hastert proposed ethics training sessions to a members-only meeting of the House Republican Caucus.

Great idea. If executive privilege isn't a problem, maybe they can subpoena the manual that Harriet Miers worked up for that post-Libby-indictment refresher course that Karl Rove & Co were forced to endure.

The key to the House rules, as Hastert's flack emphasized, is subtlety.

A PAC contribution is always more nuanced than a Rolls Royce. A golf trip to Scotland is more nuanced than a yacht on the Potomac, which is more nuanced than a Capitol-convenient lobbyist's hospitality suite with extra bedrooms, which is more subtle than Jeff Gannon/Guckert.

Holding a vote open for an extra hour is more nuanced than threatening a primary challenge against a member, which is more nuanced than bribing him with campaign contributions.

Sneaking last-minute midnight provisions on behalf of lobbyists into thousand-page bills is more nuanced than sneaking them in during conference committee, which is more nuanced than letting defense contractors into conference committee to write those provisions.

Trading K Street access for K Street jobs is more nuanced than gerrymandering a state in order to increase the number of Republican seats is more nuanced than using the FAA to chase down out-of-state legislators, which is more nuanced than money-laundering.

This subtlety thing is pretty subtle, I grant you; minding your quid's and quo's is *hard work*, as *W* might say. Which is why I'd recommend that Hastert boil it down into two simple rules for his Caucus:

1. Don't get caught.
2. If Rule 1 fails, use as many of these words as possible: “full responsibility,” “more time with my family,” “Betty Ford clinic,” “politics of personal destruction,” “not gay,” and “Jim Wright.”

I'm sure the Speaker would be delighted to receive additional suggestions from citizens.