

Justice, Injustice and Just

“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” That’s what George Orwell wrote in his classic *Animal Farm*. Everyone was equal in the beginning and then some of the animals thought they should get a bigger piece of the pie (those pigs!). I’ve always found that this attitude was offensive and violated the spirit of equality that allegedly is the cornerstone of our legal system. As my buddy Larry the cable guy would say, “He ain’t got on dog in the fight.” I think those of us who dogs in the fight need to be included. I don’t think this is business as usual. I think this is big brother smiling down. Our President apparently believes that he is getting, becoming all knowing, all seeing, all omniscient presence.

So what if a jury found that Scooter Libby committed perjury and a jury found him guilty! Bush knows best. He commuted his jail time! Wouldn’t it be nice if the President could pardon my clients, especially the ones that lie to the court? I’m usually on the side of the underdog and rail against the oppressive powers of the man, the system and the DA’s. But this time, I have no sympathy for the elitist, privileged, and fortuitous Libby.

President Bush said that he had used his power of clemency to commute the 30-month sentence for Lewis Libby, Jr., the former top aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, who was convicted of perjury in March and was due to begin serving his time within weeks.

The action, announced just hours after a Federal Appeals Court denied Mr. Libby’s request to allow him to remain free while his case is on appeal, spares Mr. Libby his prison term, but it does not excuse him from stiff fines or probation. (At this time!).

In a statement issued early this evening announcing his decision, Mr. Bush said he had listened to both critics and defenders of Mr. Libby, who was convicted of four felony counts for lying during a CIA leak investigation. “I respect the jury’s verdict” Mr. Bush said. “But I have concluded that the prison sentence given to Mr. Libby is excessive. Therefore, I am commuting the portion of Mr. Libby’s sentence that required him to spend 30 months in prison.”

Like a pardon, a commutation is a form of clemency, granted to the President by the Constitution. But a pardon is an official act of forgiveness, whereas a commutation simply reduces the penalty, without making an official judgment of forgiveness. Forgive me for my cynicism.

There is a quote that says “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Edmund Burke (1729-1797). According to Thomas Paine “Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one.” I think we really need to be vigilant about Big Brother (Bush) looming in the shadows. Just because I’m paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t out to get more of you for that matter.

See ya next time. Be careful out there and watch your back!