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THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2005

Bush Meet Kafka. Kafka Meet Bush.

by Michael in New York on [3/24/2005 02:16:00 AM](#)

Kafka came to Guantanamo Bay this year, once military proceedings started to review the cases of the prisoners being held and determine whether any of them should be released. Some lovely highlights: prisoners were refused the right to hear many of the charges against them or what evidence was used to buttress those charges (it's classified; stop whining) and the lawyers and others prosecuting them covered up their name-tags.

"So far, 64 detainees have had hearings scheduled before administrative review boards, and 39 have declined to attend. Captain Kaniut said one reason was that many were skeptical about the fairness of the proceedings. Another reason, he said, may be that the cases against them are so strong that a hearing would be futile," says the New York Times.

And there are other reasons. Recent articles in the New York Times and elsewhere described serious and upsetting charges by court appointed lawyers. (If anything can be said to be "upsetting" that is less than the rape, torture and killing of prisoners we KNOW have no useful information.) Among the claims: guards at Guantanamo Bay pretend to be lawyers and meet with prisoners to get info; then, when the real lawyers show up, the prisoners don't trust them and refuse to cooperate in their own defense. Other prisoners meeting with lawyers have felt the wrath of guards after those lawyers leave and then don't want to see the lawyers when they return.

This is all making a sad mockery of what the United States stands for: fair trials, the rule of law, decency, respect and all those other qualities in short supply at Guantanamo and the numerous secret locations around the world we don't even know about. The sad truth is that some of the prisoners being detained actually are bad guys, but we don't need to treat them like beasts or demean our principles even for them.

And the rest -- people sold to the military by warlords to collect on bounty, innocent fools in the wrong place at the wrong time, and even the true believer combatants who signed up when Afghanistan or Iraq was invaded by another country (hgwenever benevolent) but don't have any knowledge of terrorism etc -- god help us for how we've treated them and debased, more than anyone else, ourselves.



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