



## Collateral Damage

Some Obama administration insiders, including White House chief of staff **Rahm Emanuel** and environmental czar **Carol Browner**, face potential exposure



for activities they undertook during the Clinton administration, thanks to President Obama's repeal of the 2001 executive order that allowed former presidents and vice presidents to keep documents secret past the traditional 12-year limit.

Under the new rules, Freedom of Information Act requests for documents previously sealed under the 2001 order can be reviewed by the Department of Justice for release. The DOJ would determine whether the document can be released.

"[The repeal] was intended to allow outside groups the chance to get at documents from the Bush administration, but the order had to open the way for Clinton documents, too," says a Senate Republican staffer on the Judiciary Committee. "There may be some interesting stuff from the Clinton years involving many of the people who are now in senior Obama positions."

Emanuel was a senior adviser to President Clinton. Browner served in the cabinet. Also of interest to Republicans: documents that might have involved new secretary of state **Hillary Rodham Clinton**.

## Citrus Politics

Florida sources say that Rep. **Adam Putnam's** decision to seek



the Florida state agriculture commissioner job is grounded not only in positioning himself for a gubernatorial run, but also in dissatisfaction with the House Republican leadership he worked with in the 2006–08 congressional cycle.

Given Florida's extensive agriculture business (not only fruits and vegetables—the state now has more cattle than Oklahoma), and the makeup of the state geographically and politically, Putnam believes he can use the office as a stepping-stone to the governor's mansion.

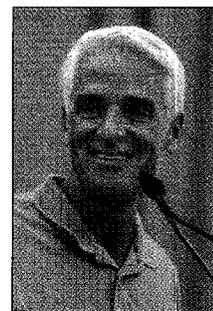
Putnam was seen as a rising star in the House, and directed the minority party's communications efforts. But Putnam was essentially pushed aside by fellow member **Eric Cantor** during the

home mortgage bailout debate last fall. While Cantor made several communications miscues, Putnam continued to be the team player and took the fall.

"Cantor took a principled vote to defeat the first \$750 billion bailout that created the TARP funds, and made it all about Pelosi's mean speech," says a House leadership aide. "Adam wanted to make it about the principled victory, but Cantor won that fight and the rest is history, and not good history."

Cantor led the fight to get the TARP bill passed, which added to the sins of Republican House members who lost their elections later that fall.

Putnam is expected to finish his term, and will be challenged for the state job. It is believed that



**Gov. Charlie Crist** is interested in seeking reelection to his job, but would be term-limited. Some think he may run

for the open Senate seat now filled by Sen. **Mel Martinez**.

## Executive Disorder

Legal counsel at the Central Intelligence Agency have not received clear guidance from the White House on President Obama's decision to close Guantanamo Bay and put limits

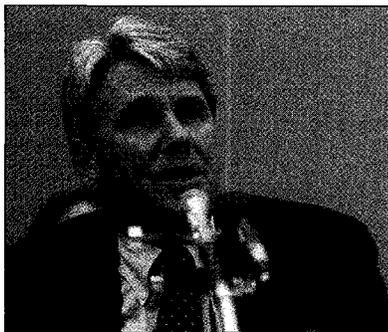
on the use of enhanced interrogation techniques.

Obama's executive order on the matter is so confusing that even the White House Counsel's Office and the Department of Justice cannot provide the CIA with clear guidance on the matter.

"We think our people are potentially exposed to criminal prosecution for interrogation activities that previously were approved, but we don't know," says one CIA official. "Our people currently might not be exposed in some situations now, but again, we don't know. And no one seems to want to simply point out that the whole thing is just confusing."

### Show Trial Shauna

If you haven't heard of **Shauna Daly**, don't worry; not many other people in Washington have, either. But you will be hearing more about her activities as research director in the White House Counsel's office. Daly, who is not a lawyer, was hired by White House



counsel **Gregory Craig** out of the Obama campaign's opposition research operation.

Daly, according to former Obama campaign officials, has already been attempting to figure out the best way to cull through the mounds and mounds of Bush administration documents and e-mail files the Obama team has begun pulling together. Daly,

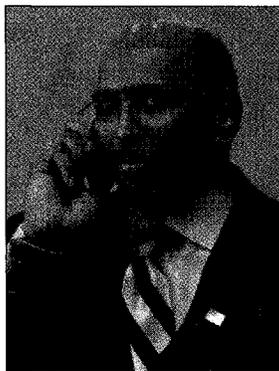
according to Capitol Hill sources, has also met privately with senior House Democratic leadership staff about areas of interest for investigation of the Bush administration.

Craig set up his counsel's office in a similar way to the Clinton White House counsel's office during the height of the **Monica Lewinsky** scandal and impeachment process. There will be communications and research teams assigned to the counsel's office so that lawyers there can be aggressive in pursuing issues they feel are political opportunities for them.

One of Daly's colleagues will be a lawyer with some knowledge of how to pursue such cases. Craig has recruited **Norman Eisen**, who co-founded Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, an organization that has filed a number of civil suits against the Bush administration and worked in partnership with the House oversight committee on a number of hearings in the past few years.

### Steele Curtains

Conservatives are generally supportive of new Republican National Chairman **Michael Steele**, but are eager to see what Steele does with a number of RNC outside consulting contracts. According to some RNC aides, several younger consultants who work in social media and online strategies are looking for fat contracts from the



new RNC team that has promised to focus on Internet fundraising and organizing online. But those consultants also have ties to Google, a corporation that is so tight with the Obama administration that its CEO, **Eric Schmidt**,



visited the White House three different times in the first two weeks of Obama's administration. Google has also funded several left-wing political groups, the most notorious being MoveOn.org.

### Sununu 2010

Senate Republicans are hopeful that their former colleague, **John Sununu**, will choose to seek the seat that will become available in 2010 with the exit of **Judd Gregg** to join the Obama administration as commerce secretary.

Gregg made it clear to Senate minority leader **Mitch McConnell** that he wanted out of the Senate, particularly after he felt he was unfairly tarred for his role as a negotiator on the federal bailout legislation last fall. "He didn't think he'd get a fair shot back in New Hampshire," says a political consultant. "And he wasn't particularly enthusiastic about a run."

Sununu has indicated that he wants to seek political office again, and he was considered a strong conservative voice during his time in the Senate. ❁

# OSAMA BIN ELVIS

By Angelo M. Codevilla

