

# **The Gonzales Cantata**

## **Libretto**

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**Alberto Gonzales' resignation statement**

August 27, 2007

# The Gonzales Cantata

## Dramatis Personae

**ATTORNEY GENERAL ALBERTO R. GONZALES**  
SOPRANO



### **THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY, D-VT.**  
CHAIRMAN  
SOPRANO



**SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER, R-PA.**  
RANKING MEMBER  
SOPRANO



**SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN, D-CALIF.**  
TENOR



**SENATOR ORRIN G. HATCH, R-UTAH**  
ALTO



**SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, D-MD.**  
SOPRANO



**SENATOR JEFF SESSIONS, R-ALA.**  
MEZZO SOPRANO



**SENATOR CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, R-IOWA**  
SOPRANO



**SSAT CHORUS**

## 1. OVERTURE

## 2. INTRODUCTION (RECIT.)

LEAHY: Good morning.

CHORUS: Today, the Department of Justice  
is experiencing a crisis of leadership.

LEAHY: I've warned for years  
against lack of experience and judgment.

CHORUS: We're seeing the results  
amid rising crime  
and rampant war profiteering,  
abandonment of civil rights,  
lack of accountability.

LEAHY: I fear the Justice Department is losing its  
way.  
Investigation into the firing  
of United States attorneys  
have revealed an administration that  
values

## 3. LOYALTY OVER JUDGMENT (CHORUS)

CHORUS: loyalty over judgment,  
secrecy over openness,  
ideology over competence.

## 4. THE PURPOSE (RECIT.)

GRASSLEY: It is improper to fire a U.S. attorney  
for unjust partisan gain.

SPECTER: The purpose of this hearing  
is to determine whether Attorney General  
Alberto Gonzales  
should continue in that capacity.

## 5. THE OATH (RECIT.)

LEAHY: Mr. Attorney General, please raise your  
right hand.  
Do you solemnly swear  
that the testimony you will give before  
this committee  
will be the whole truth,  
so help you God?

GONZALES: I do.

CARDIN: Let us go over the U.S. attorneys who  
were fired.

## 6. THE LIST (CHORUS)

In New Mexico,  
a U.S. attorney refused to expedite a probe into  
Democrats  
before an election.

In Nevada and Arkansas, in Arizona and California,  
U.S. attorneys investigated corrupt Republican  
politicians.

In Washington,  
a U.S. attorney declined to intervene  
in a disputed gubernatorial election.

In Missouri,  
there were voter fraud investigations.

We look at those who were removed  
and find they were involved in political issues  
that were unpopular to the Republican  
establishment.

What is one to think?

## 7. THE DECISIONS (RECIT.)

FEINSTEIN: Mr. Attorney General. I may be very slow.  
But I don't understand how this list was compiled.

GONZALES: Senator, I have searched my memory.  
My schedule shows a meeting,  
but I have no recollection of it.

SESSIONS: Well, I'm concerned about your recollection, really,  
because it's not that long ago.  
I would want to know who selected these individuals.  
Who was the decider?

GONZALES: Senator, I'm the attorney general. I make the decisions.

## 8. I DON'T RECALL (ARIA)

GONZALES: I did not make decisions about who should or should not be asked to resign.  
I don't recall ever saying "No, take that person off," or, "Add this person."  
I ultimately approved the list of recommendations that were submitted to me.  
Those were my decisions.

## 9. YOU DON'T RECALL (RECIT.)

LEAHY: You don't recall the meeting where you made the decision.  
How can you be sure you made the decision?

(LAUGHTER)

GONZALES: Senator, I recall making the decision.

LEAHY: When?

GONZALES: Sir, I don't recall.

## 10. PREPARATION (DUET)

SPECTER: Let me review some of the record with you.  
I know you're familiar with this record because I know you've been preparing for this hearing.

GONZALES: I prepare for every hearing, Senator.

SPECTER: Do you prepare for all your press conferences?  
Were you prepared for the press conference where you said there weren't any discussions involving you?

GONZALES: I said I prepared for every hearing.

SPECTER: Well, and I'm asking you, do you prepare for your press conferences?

GONZALES: Senator, we do take time to prepare for the press conference.

SPECTER: Let's -- let's move on.  
I don't think you're going to win a debate about your preparation, frankly.

## 11. STAND BY THE DECISION (DUET)

CARDIN: Mr. Gonzales, what concerns me the most is after reviewing all the facts, you stand by the decision.

GONZALES: I do, Senator. I do.

CARDIN: You would still do the same thing again.

GONZALES: Senator...

CARDIN: I don't understand that.

GONZALES: Senator, I would use a different process,  
a different process...

CARDIN: Same conclusion?

GONZALES: I have no reason to believe that the basis of the recommendations was improper motives.

## 12. THIS IS NOT ABOUT ALBERTO GONZALES (ARIA)

GONZALES: This is not about Alberto Gonzales.  
This is about the Department of Justice.  
I look back with pride in the things that  
we've accomplished:  
protecting our kids,  
protecting our neighborhoods,  
protecting our country.

I have to be --  
I have to know in my heart  
that I can continue to be effective  
as the leader of this department.

The moment I believe I can no longer be  
effective,  
I will resign.

## 13. FLAGELLATION (CHORUS)

CHORUS: It's almost as if the walls were actually  
crumbling  
on this huge department.  
Nothing gets answered directly.  
Everything is obfuscated.  
Something's rotten in Denmark.  
The way that this investigation has been  
handled  
is really deplorable.  
The communication was atrocious.  
It's generous to say that there were  
misstatements.  
And I believe you ought to suffer the  
consequences.

There is evidence of low morale --  
very low morale,  
lack of credibility --  
your personable credibility.  
The department is dysfunctional.

I urge you to re-examine your  
performance  
and, for the good of the country,  
step down.

## 14. COMFORT

HATCH: I think we all will agree,  
I think you've agreed  
that this was poorly handled.

GONZALES: Yes.

HATCH: I mean, how many times  
do you have to be flagellated over that?

There are two legitimate issues  
in the U.S. attorney controversy.  
First, were any of them removed for an  
improper reason?  
Second, did any administration officials  
knowingly mislead Congress or the  
public?

After three months of hearings,  
all kinds of interviews,  
and thousands upon thousands of pages  
of documents,  
the evidence shows  
that the answer to both of those  
questions is a resounding no.

15. ATTACK ME

CHORUS: The evidence that we've uncovered shows that politics have entered the Department.

You've come here seeking our trust.  
Frankly, Mr. Attorney General,  
you've lost mine.

GONZALES: This is not about Alberto Gonzales.  
It's about what's best for the  
department.

CHORUS: There are widespread abuses.  
And we know it goes even beyond what  
we've heard.

GONZALES: Clearly, there are issues I have to deal  
with.

CHORUS: Incompetent appointees.

GONZALES I believe that I can be --

CHORUS: Legal briefs that contradict International  
Law.

I think that there are some good things  
that I can accomplish on behalf of this  
country.

CHORUS: Executive interference in the Justice  
Department.

GONZALES: I'm going to work as hard as I can  
to reestablish trust

CHORUS: Torture of detainees.

GONZALES: with this committee and members of  
Congress,  
and of course, with the career  
professionals at our department.

CHORUS: Illegal domestic surveillance programs.

GONZALES: Everything that we do, the credit goes  
to them.

CHORUS: Harassment of the press.

GONZALES: And so, when there are attacks  
against the department,  
you're attacking the career professionals.

CHORUS: Perjury.

LEAHY: I don't trust you.

GONZALES: You should attack me.  
You should attack me.

(APPLAUSE)

PROTESTER: Fire Gonzales now!  
PROTESTER: Stop lying!  
PROTESTER: Liar! Liar! Impeach!

Thank you. We stand adjourned.

## 16. DIFFERENTLY

GONZALES: Looking back,  
things that I would have done  
differently?

I should have told him,  
And I think he should have --  
I should have asked him  
I should have told him the factors  
that I thought were important for him to  
consider.  
I should have told him,  
And I think I would have told him --  
I should have told him,  
And we should have a list.  
I think these are the things --  
I think these are the kinds of things, in  
hindsight,  
that I wish would have happened.

I think it's also unfair  
(I think it's all so unfair)

it is clear that we struggled -- not struggled --  
Where we made a mistake, clearly -- I  
think --  
is once we said "performance,"  
we should have defined that.  
Because performance, for me, means lots  
of things.

It means whether or not you've got leadership  
skills,  
whether or not you've got management  
skills.  
It may mean whether or not  
you support the president.

It may mean that you don't have --  
that you have a sufficient --  
that you have relationships.

And so there are lots of things that fall within  
the definition of performance-related.

And I think that we should have been --  
we should have defined what we meant  
by that.

## 17. GOD BLESS AMERICA

CHORUS: God bless the land that gave us birth!  
No pray'r but this know we.  
God bless the land, of all the earth,  
The happy and the free.  
And where's the land like ours can brave  
The splendor of the day.  
And find no son of hers a slave?  
God bless America!  
God bless the land, the land beloved  
Forever and for aye!  
God bless the land that gave us birth.  
God bless America!

GONZALES: Thirteen years ago I entered public  
service  
to make a positive difference in the lives  
of others.  
I have traveled a remarkable journey

Yesterday I informed the president  
of my decision to resign

I often remind our fellow citizens  
that we live in the greatest country in the  
world  
and I have lived the American dream.

Even my worst days as attorney general  
have been better than my father's best  
days.

Thank you, and God bless America.