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As we all know, in the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups: the police who investigate crime and the district attorneys who prosecute the offenders.

Last night's episode of television's longest running drama -- NBC's "Law & Order" -- featured District Attorney Jack McCoy prosecuting a John Yoo-esque Bush administration Justice Department attorney for writing a legal memo authorizing the torture of detainees.

"Jack, you want to prosecute a member of the Bush administration for assaulting suspected terrorists?" McCoy is asked in the season premiere episode, titled "Memo from the Dark Side."

"The word is 'torturing,'" says McCoy, played by Sam Waterston. "And yes -- it's about time somebody did."

The episode has been embraced by some of the most vocal advocates for prosecuting actual Bush administration officials for torture.

Anthony D. Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, [wrote on the Huffington Post](#) that "[w]hat McCoy understands is that in America, the rule of law applies to everyone. No one is above the law, not even (and some might say especially) the most powerful. ... In real life, there has yet to be an investigation into the high-level authorization of torture, a crime that has stained the reputation of our nation at home and abroad."

Writes Romero: "Toward the end of the episode, the assistant D.A. declares, '[I]t is not disloyal to hold our officials to the highest standards of conduct.' Indeed. In fact, it is the epitome of loyalty and patriotism to do so. Now the question is, in real life, will Attorney General Holder rise to the occasion?"

Over at Salon, Glenn Greenwald interviews the show's executive producer and lead writer René Balcer.

"Three specific aspects of the episode impressed me most," Greenwald writes, "(1) its depiction of torture and those who authorized it is deliberately realistic, so it's crystal clear exactly which Bush officials they are indicting (it contains the infamous Yoo endorsement of presidential testicle-crushing); (2) it focuses on the deaths caused by the American torture regime, not merely some 'water poured down three people's noses'; and, most of all: (3) it develops a plausible and thoughtful theory for how criminal liability could be imposed on the DOJ lawyers who authorized Bush's torture. If nothing else, this depiction of the brutality of America's torture and the need for accountability will likely reach at least some who haven't been previously exposed to such arguments, and provides a good counterweight to the standard depiction of torture in American entertainment as something employed by heroic protectors."

Watch the show in two parts [here](#) and [here](#) .