

Sunday, December 24, 2006

Calley: "They were all the enemy, they were all to be destroyed, sir."

Read the chilling direct and cross examination of William Calley, and this account of the My Lai courts martial, American commanders are said to have told Desert Storm soldiers "No My Lais." Among the many important lessons of the My Lai massacre for criminal defense lawyers are the following: First, power is at risk for abuse by anyone -- including police, and including criminal defendants who actually committed violent crimes -- and at greater risk of abuse the greater is the power. Second, no matter how vile the alleged crime -- even if one's client actually committed the act -- the criminal defense lawyer must zealously defend the client without reservations. To leave the work to less competent lawyers leaves all sorts of injustices to result, many of which will reverberate far beyond the specific trial and the specific defendant. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 00:00