

Sunday, March 25, 2007

Why would law enforcement not want to record "confessions"? Why, indeed.

Ernesto Miranda (r). (Image from State Department's website). Praise attorney Paul Charlton for wanting "FBI agents to tape-record interviews and confessions, particularly in child molestation cases on Arizona's 21 Indian reservations, something the FBI historically has not done." Unfortunately, Mr. Charlton's voice is of less authority on this matter now that he is one of the eight fired United States Attorneys. Why would law enforcement people not want to videotape suspects' "confessions" to enable judges and jurors to make fairer decisions about the voluntariness of the "confessions" and their reliability? Why, indeed? To hide police prevarication, exaggeration and distortion? To try to avoid having jurors lose their lunch (or breakfast) over heavy-handed police interrogation tactics? The last time I checked, the police are supposed to work for the people, and not the other way around. Criminal defendants' lives and liberty are worth requiring all police agencies to purchase and use video cameras to tape "confessions". Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 02:00