

Judge who ruled pro-Chen indicted for malfeasance

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A Taipei District Court judge who found former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and his wife, Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍), not guilty in a bank merger case was indicted yesterday by Taipei prosecutors on suspicion of negligently leaking the name of a witness to the public.

Judge Chou Chan-chun (周昌春) and his secretary, Liu Lee-ying (劉麗英), were charged with malfeasance for being negligent in the disclosure of a witness' name who was involved in a case involving illegal drug production and transportation heard by Chou, Taipei prosecutors said.

Chou and Liu were found to have failed to seal a classified document which had witness names on it. As a result, after a lawyer for the defendant in the case, surnamed Lu, read the document and told Lu about the matter, the witness was threatened and beaten by Lu, prosecutors said.

Last month, Chou became the target of some pan-blue political commentators when he, citing insufficient evidence, acquitted Chen and Wu of charges that they laundered money and took bribes from bankers in exchange for manipulating bank mergers.

Chou said in the Chen-Wu -ruling that the Anti-Corruption Act (貪污治罪條例) states that a public official violates the law by taking bribes in exchange for decisions or policies that favor the bribers, but according to the Constitution, the president's duties do not include overseeing bank mergers, so Chen therefore would have been unable to receive money from banks and reciprocate by helping their merger proposals.

Chou also ordered Chen's release without bail in December 2008. However, Chen was soon detained again after prosecutors appealed Chou's ruling and the Taipei District Court overruled Chen's release.

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