



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 19, 2011

Bachmann: Would She Support Gay Marriage if Waterboarded?

"Until I'd been waterboarded," Clay [said](#) in a YouTube video where he underwent the procedure. "I really didn't have an opinion whether it was torture or not. So I wanted to find out for myself." He emerged with a clear verdict: It is torture.

[Waterboarding](#) is the forcing of water down the nose and throat of prone prisoners involving the pouring of water, usually with a wet cloth over the nose or mouth of the immobile prisoner. The procedure is generally described as creating the sensation of drowning, but it is more than that since water seeps into the breathing passages and lungs. The gag reflex is induced immediately.



The *Des Moines Register* asked Michele Bachmann November 16 if she would be willing to undergo the procedure. A member of the *Register* editorial board [asked](#) Bachmann: "If you think it's not that bad, would you ever willingly submit to it just to see what it's like?" Bachmann [replied](#) that she would not submit to waterboarding. "Well, I think it would be absurd to have the President of the United States submit themselves to waterboarding," Bachmann replied. Bachmann continued: "There are those that have submitted themselves to it, so that they can talk about it and speak about it afterwards."

In addition to Ed Clay, there are others who "have submitted themselves to it." *Vanity Fair* writer [Christopher Hitchens](#) and conservative Chicago radio talk show host [Eric "Mancow" Muller](#) agreed to be waterboarded in recent years. Both were dogged supporters of this form of "enhanced interrogation" and denied it was torture before experiencing it firsthand. Both emerged from the waterboard table — in less than 10 seconds — to proclaim it was torture.

Professional tough guy Ed Clay lasted longer — nearly a minute — before stopping the waterboarding, and [acknowledged](#) afterward that he wanted to stop it immediately after it started.

Clay [noted](#) that people will say anything to end the torture: "Let's say Cain tried to be waterboarded. I bet you he would admit to the sexual harassment stuff that he's been charged with or that's been talked about the last few weeks. I bet you would get Bachmann to admit that she supports gay marriage. Or you could get Romney to admit that Romneycare is the same as Obamacare. We could get pretty much anybody to say just about anything to stop the waterboarding."

Likewise, former Minnesota Governor and former Navy SEAL Jesse Ventura underwent waterboarding at [SERE school](#) training. He [told](#) the women on ABC's *The View* television show a couple of years ago that "Yes, we were all waterboarded there and, yes, it is torture." Ventura [added](#): "It's a good thing I'm not the President. I'm an independent. Because I would prosecute the people who did it, I would prosecute the people who ordered it, and they would all go to jail."



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Bachmann [told](#) the *Des Moines Register* that she didn't believe waterboarding was torture because it doesn't kill or leave a visible mark. "Is it uncomfortable? Yes, I don't deny that it's uncomfortable. But a person is not going to lose their life, nor will they be permanently injured or permanently impaired by this. And it's done on very unique, strict circumstances." Of course, the constitutional standard for treatment of prisoners is not merely a ban on torture that leaves a mark; the [Eighth Amendment](#) bans all "cruel and unusual punishments." And there isn't a prosecutor in any state of the Union who wouldn't indict a dog owner on charges of "animal cruelty" if the owner waterboarded his dog. Jesse Ventura [stumped](#) *The View* Co-Host Elisabeth Hasselbeck, who supports waterboarding, with this question: "If waterboarding's okay, then why don't we let our police do it to suspects so they can learn what they know?"

Thumbnail photo at top: Michele Bachmann

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