DNAPKcs-dependent arrest of RNA polymerase II transcription in the presence of DNA breaks

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DNA double-strand break (DSB) repair interferes with ongoing cellular processes, including replication and transcription. Although the process of replication stalling upon collision of replication forks with damaged DNA has been extensively studied, the fate of elongating RNA polymerase II (RNAPII) that encounters a DSB is not well understood. We show that the occurrence of a single DSB at a human RNAPII-transcribed gene leads to inhibition of transcription elongation and reinitiation. Upon inhibition of DNA protein kinase (DNAPK), RNAPII bypasses the break and continues transcription elongation, suggesting that it is not the break per se that inhibits the processivity of RNAPII, but the activity of DNAPK. We also show that the mechanism of DNAPK-mediated transcription inhibition involves the proteasome-dependent pathway. The results point to the pivotal role of DNAPK activity in the eviction of RNAPII from DNA upon encountering a DNA lesion.

DNA lesions endanger cell viability by affecting fundamental DNA-dependent nuclear processes such as replication and transcription1–2. During the S phase of the cell cycle, collision of replication forks with damaged DNA stalls ongoing DNA replication3. Moreover, RNA polymerases are stalled at bulky lesions and are subsequently removed, by ubiquitination and proteasome dependent degradation in transcription-coupled repair4–6. Recent studies have shown that RNAPI and RNAPII transcription machineries are affected by the presence of DSBs and that transcription is transiently repressed7–9. DSBs upstream of the promoter of an RNAPII reporter gene inhibited transcription elongation due to ataxia telangiectasia mutated (ATM)-dependent signaling and the spreading of ubiquitination7. Similarly, DNA break–dependent RNAPII inhibition was mediated by the ATM kinase activity8. In addition, Poly(ADP-ribose) polymerase 1 (PARP1) was shown to have a role in removing nascent RNA and elongating RNAPI from sites of DNA damage induced by microirradiation, suggesting that under conditions where a variety of lesions are induced, PARP1 sets up a repressive chromatin structure to block transcription by recruiting members of the polycomb complex10. Although there is increasing evidence of interplay between transcription and DNA repair, the dynamics of the RNAPII machinery upon encountering a single DSB during transcriptional elongation have not been addressed.

To address this question, we took advantage of the site-specific meganuclease I-PpoI that has several recognition sequences in the human genome and was previously used to induce single DSBs in human cells at defined positions11. We used this system to examine how the presence of a DSB, and the mounting of the subsequent DNA damage response (DDR), affect the transcriptional output of genes harboring I-PpoI recognition sequences. Using this system, we show that induction of a single DSB at an RNAPII-transcribed gene leads to DNAPK-dependent inhibition of transcription. DNAPK catalytic subunit (DNAPKcs) activity is required for evicting RNAPII from the DNA when a DNA lesion is encountered. We demonstrate that upon inhibition of DNAPK, RNAPII bypasses the break and continues transcription elongation. DNAPK-mediated silencing occurs through a mechanism that involves proteasome-dependent degradation. Our results suggest that DNAPK activity is required to prevent transcription through strand breaks, pointing to a previously unknown role for this kinase in preventing the production of mutated transcripts.

RESULTS

Double-strand breaks induce arrest of RNAPII transcription

To investigate the dynamics of RNAPII transcription machinery in the presence of DSBs, we took advantage of the I-PpoI endonuclease, which has natural cleavage sites in the human genome. In addition to the well-characterized target site for I-PpoI in the 28S ribosomal RNA gene and the recently characterized unique cleavage site in an intron of the DAB1 gene on human chromosome 1 (ref. 11), we identified an additional 14 recognition sequences (Supplementary Fig. 1a) by using in silico analysis. To investigate RNAPII transcription kinetics following I-PpoI DNA break induction, we established stable HeLa and HEK293T cell lines expressing the I-PpoI enzyme, fused to the ligand-binding domain of the estrogen receptor (ER)11. Addition of 4-hydroxytamoxifen (4-OHT) to both stable cell lines resulted in a time-dependent nuclear translocation of I-PpoI and cleavage of the endogenous 28S rDNA I-PpoI site, as demonstrated by the induction of γ-H2AX, mainly around nucleoli (Supplementary Fig. 1b).

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Among the five RNAPII-regulated genes that contain I-PpoI recognition sites, we chose to study DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4, as they were adequately expressed in both HeLa and HEK293T cells (Fig. 1a and data not shown). Notably, the nuclear translocation of I-PpoI resulted in site-specific DNA breaks at DAB1 and RYR2 but not at INTS4 (Fig. 1a,b). Sequencing of the INTS4 gene revealed that the I-PpoI site was degenerate in HEK293T cells but not in HeLa cells (Supplementary Fig. 1c). We thought the absence of a DSB at the INTS4 I-PpoI site in HeLa cells might be due to the structure of the surrounding chromatin that restricts the access of the endonuclease to the site. We thus used the INTS4 gene throughout this study as a negative control.

Transcription inhibition, demonstrated by the reduction of the mature and nascent RNA levels of DAB1 and RYR2, was transient and concomitant with break induction (Fig. 1b and Supplementary Fig. 2a). Transcription restoration closely followed the dynamics of the repair of the breaks in both cell lines (Fig. 1b and Supplementary Fig. 2a): after 3–4 h, transcription levels increased, with full restoration occurring approximately 6 h following the initial break induction. Similarly, 3–4 h after the initiation of DSBs, we began to detect an increase in repaired I-PpoI sites, with completion of repair reaching a plateau at approximately 6 h (Fig. 1b and Supplementary Fig. 2a). As expected, the relative expression of INTS4 and two other control genes (ATAC2, also known as CSR2BP, and B-ACTIN, also known as ACTB), which do not have I-PpoI cleavage sites, were not altered (Fig. 1b and Supplementary Fig. 2b). These data suggest a specific inhibition of RNAPII transcription at I-PpoI targeted genes.

**Figure 1** RNAPII transcription inhibition in response to DSBs. (a) Schematic representation of three RNAPII-transcribed genes that harbor an I-PpoI cleavage site. The position of the break (red arrow) and the primers for quantification of the mRNA (small black arrows) or DNA (small red arrows) content are indicated. (b) Quantitative PCR with reverse transcription (qRT-PCR) analysis of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa (top) and HEK293T (bottom) cells at different time points after the addition of 4-OHT. mRNA values are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content are normalized to a part of the gene not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments.

**Figure 2** DNAPKcs-dependent transcriptional arrest after DSB induction. (a) qRT-PCR analysis of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiency in HeLa cells treated with DMSO, ATM inhibitor (ATMi) and DNAPKcs inhibitor (DNAPKcsi) at different time points upon addition of 4-OHT. mRNA values (top) are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content (bottom) are normalized to a part of the gene not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments. (b) qRT-PCR analysis of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa cells treated with siRNA that targets a scramble sequence, the ATM sequence (si ATM), the DNAPKcs sequence (si DNAPKcs) and the NBS1 sequence (si NBS1) at different time points after the addition of 4-OHT. mRNA values (top) are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content (bottom) are normalized to a part of the gene not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments.
The role of DNAPKcs in transcriptional arrest.

Quantification of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa cells treated with siRNA against a scramble sequence and against DNAPKcs (si DNAPKcs) and in cells treated with siRNA against DNAPKcs and complemented with wild-type (WT) or kinase-dead (KD) DNAPKcs. mRNA values (top) are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content (bottom) are normalized to a part of the gene not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments.

To further investigate the involvement of the kinase activity of DNAPKcs in transcriptional arrest, we complemented cells where expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa cells treated with siRNA-resistant forms of wild-type and kinase-deficient DNAPKcs in breaks rescue the DSB-mediated transcriptional inhibition. Moreover, it has been previously shown that depletion of XRCC4 results in a stronger association of DNAPKcs with DNA breaks, further supporting the necessity of DNAPKcs binding to breaks associated with transcription inhibition.

The downregulation of the target genes by siRNA as well as the rescue of the endogenous DNAPKcs levels after re-expression of siRNA-resistant wild-type and kinase-dead forms of DNAPKcs was confirmed by western blot (Supplementary Fig. 3a,b). Moreover, we confirmed that re-expression of siRNA-resistant wild-type, but not the kinase-dead, form of DNAPKcs rescues the capacity of DNAPKcs for autophosphorylation at Ser2056 (Supplementary Fig. 3c).

DSB at gene body affects RNAPII elongation and reinitiation

To gain insight into the mechanism of transcriptional arrest that occurs after DSB induction, we monitored elongating and initiating RNAPII by chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP), using two different antibodies that recognize all forms of RNAPII and are

DSB-induced transcription arrest depends on Ku

DNAPKcs is recruited to DSBs by the DNA end–sensing complex Ku80–Ku70 (ref. 18). To test whether the function of DNAPKcs on

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insensitive to phosphatase treatment (Fig. 5 and Supplementary Figs. 6 and 7). At the same time, we confirmed DSB induction by I-PpoI using ChIP against γ-H2AX (Fig. 5 and Supplementary Fig. 7). I-PpoI break induction led to displacement of RNAPII from the gene body and promoter of DAB1 and RYR2 genes (Fig. 5a,b and Supplementary Figs. 6a and 7a,b). These results suggest that DSBs at an RNAPII-transcribed gene affect both the elongation and the initiation of transcription, in line with the suggestion that RNAPII transcription elongation and initiation are interlinked.20,21 As expected, inhibition of ATM activity had a more marked effect on RNAPII displacement and delayed restoration of RNAPII occupancy, correlating with delayed repair (Fig. 5a,b and Supplementary Figs. 6a and 7a,b).

Notably however, when the DNAPKcs activity was inhibited, RNAPII remained associated with the promoter and the body of DAB1 and RYR2 genes (Fig. 5a,b and Supplementary Figs. 6a and 7a,b). We observed comparable RNAPII occupancy at the gene bodies before and after the I-PpoI–induced breaks, demonstrating that in the absence of DNAPKcs, RNAPII can circumvent the break. Thus, the activity of DNAPKcs and not the break itself causes

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**Figure 5** Displacement of initiating and elongating RNAPII in response to DSB induction. (a) ChIP of RNAPII (top) and γ-H2AX (bottom) along the DAB1 gene in HeLa cells treated with DMSO, ATM inhibitor (ATMi) and DNAPKcs inhibitor (DNAPKcsi) at different time points after the induction of the break. The light blue boxes represent the areas amplified by the primers in each case. (b) ChIP of RNAPII (top) and γ-H2AX (bottom) along the RYR2 gene in HeLa cells treated as in panel a. (c) ChIP of RNAPII (left) and γ-H2AX (right) along the INTS4 gene in HeLa cells treated as in panel a. All signal values are normalized to input DNA and represent mean ± s.d. from two independent experiments.
an arrest in transcription. As predicted, the occupancy of RNAPII at the promoter and the body of the INTS4 was not altered by the addition of 4-OHT, and phosphorylation of γ-H2AX was not induced, verifying the absence of a DSB (Fig. 5c and Supplementary Fig. 7c).

To ensure that RNAPII travels on damaged chromatin when DNAPKcs is inactive, and to exclude the possibility that our observations were due to upregulation of transcription from the fraction of DAB1 and RYR2 genes that remained uncut in a population of cells, we carried out sequential ChIPs using RNAPII and γ-H2AX antibodies.

Notably, when DNAPKcs was inhibited, RNAPII and phosphorylated H2AX overlapped early after break induction, suggesting that RNAPII processing is not affected by the spreading of the DDR signal (Fig. 6a). Furthermore, RNAPII coincided with γ-H2AX in the control condition 5 h after the break induction, when transcription was gradually restored but phosphorylation of H2AX was not fully resolved (Fig. 6a). This observation further supports the idea that H2AX-dependent signaling does not affect RNAPII transcription.

To test whether the polymerase detected after the break was active and whether a full-length and not a truncated transcript was

Figure 6 RNAPII travels on the damaged DNA and overcomes the break. (a) Sequential ChIP of RNAPII and γ-H2AX along the DAB1 (upper panel) and RYR2 (lower panel) genes in HEK293T cells treated with DMSO, ATM inhibitor (ATMi) and DNAPKcs inhibitor (DNAPKcsi) at 0 h, 1 h, 3 h and 5 h after the addition of 4-OHT. Signal values are normalized to input DNA. Values represent mean ± s.d. from the three PCR replicates of one representative experiment. (b) Quantification of nascent RNA levels of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 in HeLa cells treated with DMSO, ATM inhibitor and DNAPKcs inhibitor, at 0–6 h after addition of 4-OHT. The sequence amplified corresponds to the part of the transcript that is produced after the I-PpoI cleavage site. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments.

Figure 7 The proteasome is involved in transcriptional arrest after DSB induction. (a) Quantification of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa cells treated with DMSO and the proteasome inhibitor MG132 at 0–6 h after addition of 4-OHT. mRNA values (top) are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content (bottom) are normalized to a part of the gene that is not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments. (b) qRT-PCR analysis of DAB1, RYR2 and INTS4 expression levels and cutting efficiencies in HeLa cells treated with siRNA that targets a scramble sequence and PSMD4 sequence (si PSMD4) at different time points after the addition of 4-OHT. mRNA values (top) are normalized to cyclophilin B. Values for DNA content (bottom) are normalized to a part of the gene not affected by the break. Values represent mean ± s.d. from three independent experiments.
produced, we quantified nascent RNA from DAB1 and RYR2 under DMSO, DNAPKcs-inhibitor and ATM-inhibitor conditions. This resulted in the amplification of sequences that correspond to nascent DAB1 and RYR2 transcripts occurring after the I-Ppol sequence, when DNAPKcs is inhibited, which further suggests that RNAPII circumvents the break and continues transcription (Fig. 6b).

**DSB-dependent transcription inhibition requires proteasome**

To investigate whether the mechanism behind DNAPKcs-dependent RNAPII removal from RNAPII-transcribed genes after a DSB involves proteasome-dependent degradation, we monitored the DAB1 and RYR2 mRNA levels after 4-OHT treatment in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132 (Fig. 7a and Supplementary Fig. 8a). Notably, the inhibition of the proteasome rescued the transcription defect similarly to what was observed in DNAPKcs inhibition (Fig. 7a and Supplementary Fig. 8a). It has recently been shown that the proteasome inhibitors could partially deplete ubiquitin from the cell nucleus22. To ensure that the effect in transcriptional rescue upon inhibition of DNAPKcs was not due to altered histone ubiquitination, we measured the levels of ubiquitination of histone H2A and the distribution of ubiquitin in the absence and presence of the DNAPKcs inhibitor (Supplementary Fig. 8c). We observed no reduction in ubiquitin-H2A levels upon inhibition of DNAPKcs (Supplementary Fig. 8c).

To test whether the effect of the proteasome inhibition on transcription of DAB1 and RYR2 genes after break induction is direct and not a side effect of the ubiquitin reduction following MG132 treatment, we knocked down a core subunit of the 19S proteasome complex PSMD4 that has recently been shown to be phosphorylated by ATM or ATR and to have a role in DSB repair23–25. Monitoring the transcription of DAB1 and RYR2 genes before and after break induction in these cells demonstrated that depletion of PSMD4 recapitulated the result obtained by DNAPKcs inhibition (Fig. 7b and Supplementary Fig. 8b). Downregulation of PSMD4 did not result in depletion of ubiquitin-H2A, in contrast to what was observed in the presence of MG132 (Supplementary Fig. 8c). Our results point to a role of the proteasome in destabilizing the RNAPII complex, leading to transcription inhibition in the presence of DSBs.

**DISCUSSION**

Here we report a new role for DNAPKcs in break-dependent transcriptional arrest. We also illustrate that the monoubiquitination of histone H2A is not primarily responsible for the transcription inhibition observed upon induction of a DSB at an RNAPII-transcribed gene body. Moreover, RNAPII elongation complexes do not appear to compete with the DNA-repair megacomplexes that spread across kilobases of the DSB-surrounding chromatin. Our results differ from earlier observations reporting that ATM-dependent spreading of a silencing program is involved in DSB-dependent RNAPII transcriptional inhibition2. We speculate that this discrepancy is due to the different numbers of breaks induced in the previous studies as well as to the topology of the breaks. Although ATM signaling might have a role in blocking transcription elongation when a large number of breaks are induced in regions proximal to a promoter of an RNAPII-transcribed gene, DNAPKcs is essential for arresting transcription when the RNAPII machinery comes across a single DSB.

Our observations suggest that it is not the break per se but DNAPKcs that presents a natural barrier to RNAPII and leads to its displacement from the surrounding chromatin. The association of DNAPKcs with DSBs is highly dynamic18. Previous studies have reported that impairment of the kinase activity or the phosphorylation status of DNAPKcs increases its residence time at DSB-surrounding chromatin18. Thus, our results, which show that upon pharmacological inhibition of DNAPKcs, transcription is rescued and that RNAPII can circumvent a break, suggest that it is not the DNAPKcs moiety but rather its activity that is necessary for the transcriptional arrest.

We demonstrate the involvement of the proteasome complex in rescuing the transcriptional arrest induced by DSBs. In yeast, subunits of the 19S and 20S proteasome subcomplexes are recruited to DSBs through crucial repair factors and are required for efficient repair by homologous recombination and nonhomologous end-joining pathways26. In this study it was hypothesized that the role of the proteasome at DSBs is to degrade one or more components of the DSB-repair machinery, following the completion of repair. Although we were unable to reproducibly detect DNA damage–inducible degradation of the largest subunit of RNAPII (data not shown), our results point to a mechanism that involves DNAPKcs-dependent phosphorylation and proteasome-dependent degradation of as-yet-unnamed proteins, which leads to the dissociation of the RNAPII machinery from DSB sites.

Alternatively, one may consider the activity of proteasome components that are unrelated to protein degradation. For example, previous results have shown that depletion of PSMD4 alters the kinetics of recruitment of BRCA1 and markedly affects the recruitment of RAD51 to irradiation-induced breaks25. Therefore, one can speculate that PSMD4 may reinforce the recruitment of a factor that leads to destabilization of the RNAPII elongation complex.

We show here for the first time that RNAPII can bypass a DSB. This intriguing observation further supports the model in which broken chromosome ends are kept in spatial proximity27,28. Our findings verify earlier in vitro studies showing that several bacterial polymerases can efficiently transcribe over a variety of strand breaks, including gaps that are one to five base pairs in length29–31. Moreover, non-bulky DNA lesions, such as 8-oxoguanine, uracil and O-6-methylguanine lesions, are known to be efficiently bypassed by RNA polymerases in vitro and in vivo32–35. In these instances, incorporation of incorrect bases opposite the damage leads to mutant transcripts that could direct the synthesis of mutant proteins, a process termed transcriptional mutagenesis34. The role of DNAPKcs described here in preventing RNAPII from bypassing a DSB might be crucial in avoiding the production of mutated transcripts that could lead to cancerous phenotypes.

**METHODS**

Methods and any associated references are available in the online version of the paper at http://www.nature.com/nsmb/.

Note: Supplementary information is available on the Nature Structural & Molecular Biology website.

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ARTICLES

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
T.P. designed and conducted experiments; C.B. conducted experiments; D.C. contributed reagents and ideas; E.S. conceived the study and designed experiments; and T.P. and E.S. wrote the paper.

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ONLINE METHODS

Cell culture. HEK293T and HeLa ER-I-PpoI stable cell lines were generated by retroviral infection of the cells with pBABE-puro-HA-ER-I-PpoI in a 6-well plate, as previously reported36. Twenty-four hours after the infection, the cells were plated in 150-mm dishes, and puromycin was added to a final concentration of 800 ng ml⁻¹. The surviving colonies were picked and were analyzed by immunostaining of hemagglutinin (HA)-tagged and γ-H2AX cells after 4-OHT (Sigma) treatment. The cells were grown in phenol red–free DMEM with 10% (v/v) stripped FCS buffer. The experiments were conducted in cells from the second to eighth passage after thawing. We noticed that after the ninth passage, the cells were losing the ER-I-PpoI plasmid.

To activate the nuclear translocation of ER-I-PpoI, the cells were treated with 4-OHT at 2-µM final concentration. Twelve hours before 4-OHT treatment, the medium was changed to puromycin-free medium. At the time of 4-OHT addition, the cells were kept at a maximum of 50% confluence for both cell lines. The cells were harvested at 0- to 12-h intervals after 4-OHT addition. The ATM inhibitor Ku55933 (Tocris Bioscience) and DNAPK inhibitor Nu7026 (Sigma) were used at 20-µM final concentration, and they were added 1 h prior the addition of 4-OHT. The proteasome inhibitor MG132 (Tocris Bioscience) was used at 20-µM final concentration 1 h prior to adding 4-OHT. To induce global DNA damage, the cells were treated with neocarzinostatin at a final concentration of 50 ng ml⁻¹ for 15 min, washed and fixed or harvested at the indicated time points after the treatment.

Quantitative PCR and quantitative RT-PCR analysis. Total cellular RNA was purified from HeLa and HEK293T ER-I-PpoI cells using the RNeasy total RNA purification kit (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. cDNA was synthesized with the RT-PCR kit (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer’s instructions, in a final volume of 10 µl. qRT-PCR analysis was carried out using a Roche Lightcycler 480 II system for 50 cycles. The expression of the target gene, relative to a reference gene (PPIA), was calculated by the 2⁻ⁿDₘ value of the real-time PCR analysis. The ChIP analysis was done following the Abcam protocol (http://www.abcam.com/index.html?pageconfig=resource &rid=11410).

Chromatin immunoprecipitation. The ChIP analysis was done following the Dynabeads ChIP protocol from Abcam with a few modifications. Briefly, one 150-mm dish with cells that were 50% confluent was used for each time point.

The cells were cross-linked for 10 min in 0.75% (v/v) paraformaldehyde (Electron Microscopy Sciences) and then sonicated in 1% (v/v) SDS-containing sonication buffer (50 mM HEPES, pH 8, 140 mM NaCl, 1 mM EDTA, 1% (v/v) TritonX-100, 1% (v/v) SDS) and a protease inhibitor cocktail (Roche). Twenty-five milligrams of chromatin were diluted ten times with RIPA buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8, 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM EDTA, 1% Triton X-100, 0.1% sodium deoxycholate (w/v) and 0.1% SDS (v/v)) and were used in each immunoprecipitation by adding 0.2 µg antibody and 30 µl (~10⁷) Dynabeads M-280 (Invitrogen). The beads were washed one time for 10 min with low-salt buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8, 150 mM NaCl, 2 mM EDTA, 1% (v/v) Triton X-100 and 0.1% (v/v) SDS), once for 10 min with high-salt buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8, 500 mM NaCl, 2 mM EDTA, 1% (v/v) Triton X-100 and 0.1% (v/v) SDS) and once for 10 min with LiCl buffer (10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8, 250 mM LiCl, 1 mM EDTA, 1% (v/v) NP-40 and 1% (w/v) sodium deoxycholate) and two times for 10 min each with TE buffer.

The elution was done twice at 65 °C for 15 min. Cross-links were reversed by incubation at 65 °C for 6 h. The DNA was purified after proteinase K and RNaseA treatment by using phenol-chloroform extraction and was resuspended in 50 µl of TE buffer.

The signal in each experiment was calculated using the formula (immunoprecipitated sample–IgG control)/input, and each value represents a relative DNA concentration that is based on the standard curve of the input. The antibodies used are described in Supplementary Table 1.

For sequential ChIP experiments, complexes from the initial RNAPII ChIP experiments were eluted twice with 10 mM DTT at 37 °C for 30 min and diluted 100 times in a buffer containing 50 mM Tris, pH 8, 1 mM EDTA, 150 mM NaCl, 1% (v/v) Triton X-100, 0.1% (w/v) sodium deoxycholate, and re-immunoprecipitated with anti-γ-H2AX.

To calculate the relative signal in samples where signal was observed, we gave a value of 1 to the DMSO 5-h signal as a reference value with which the other samples were compared.

Acidic histone extraction. Acidic extraction of histones was carried out using the Abcam protocol (http://www.abcam.com/index.html?pageconfig=resource &rid=11410).

Calf intestinal phosphatase treatment. Protein samples were used for calf intestinal phosphatase treatment and were separated and transferred to nitrocellulose as indicated at the western blot protocol. After the electroblotting, the membranes were treated with 100 units of calf intestinal phosphatase (New England Biolabs) in 5 ml of 1× NEB3 buffer and incubated overnight for 16 h at 37 °C. After the treatment, the membranes were washed twice with PBS plus 0.1% Tween 20 and blocked for 1 h in 5% (w/v) nonfat dry milk in PBS plus 0.1% Tween 20.

Identification of the I-PpoI sites at the human genome. The I-PpoI sites were found using standard National Center for Biotechnology Information alignment methods.
