

# THE SECRET SERVICE TAMPS DOWN AT HOME, TOO

Remember US efforts to silence any potential sources about the Secret Service scandal in Cartagena? Well, they've finally decided they ought to do the same here in the states, too.

Retired agents have been instructed to stop talking to reporters. Secret Service agents are dismantling Facebook accounts, hanging up on reporters and notifying headquarters – even calling police – when journalists knock on their doors at home for interviews about the investigation.

[snip]

More than a dozen Secret Service agents contacted by The Associated Press have abruptly hung up or declined to return multiple messages to discuss their agency and former coworkers. One reported it to headquarters when an AP reporter visited his home in the evening; some retired officials who were interviewed quickly notified headquarters about what questions reporters were asking.

A police officer came to the Annapolis, Md., home of Greg Stokes – one of the employees who already has lost his job in the scandal – and directed an AP reporter to leave his property. At the home in Virginia of another employee who also lost his job, David Chaney, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office parked a patrol car – sometimes two of them. A deputy reprimanded reporters who came to the front door.

I wouldn't much care one way or another if it

weren't for a detail in the new Secret Service Guidelines—designed to prevent future such scandals—that has gone little noticed.

In addition to prohibiting Secret Service agents from bringing foreigners to their hotel rooms or drinking within 10 hours of duty, the new guidelines require agents to adhere to US law. Maybe that's an effort to prohibit the use of sex workers, except prostitution is not illegal in all of the US. So I've been wondering whether there was something more about the scandal. There were allegations, for example, that cocaine was being used.

There are a lot of very good reasons for the Agency to try to keep details of their work and this scandal secret. But I wonder if one of them relates to further details that have not yet been reported.