

IT'S ALL ZAPRUDER'S FAULT

Jay Rosen posts and comments on a letter from an anonymous member of the WH press corps. Said anonymous journalist tells you everything you need to know about the WH press corps: It's all Zapruder's fault. Zapruder, of course, was the guy—the only guy—who filmed all of Kennedy's assassination. And apparently, the press corps has to subject itself to continual abuse from the Administration because once upon a time, some average citizen (and not the press corps) got the scoop on the biggest story of the year.

What we are responsible for is making sure that, if he collapses, or is shot at, we are in a position to get that information to our viewers/listeners/readers.

Now to be fair to this anonymous reporter, he seems to recognize how godawful the coverage of the White House is, on account not just of the masochism it requires from reporters, but also because editors seem to think they had better get a return on the full-time assassin-watcher they're paying, so they let press corps reporters cover events that reporters on other beats ought to cover.

But the notion that the White House press corps can't simply blow off the latest in White House propaganda because Bush might get shot is delightfully ghoulish—and pathetic. It ties the success of White House spin directly to the threat of violence. It means the President's bully pulpit depends, first and foremost, on the constant possibility of his death.

Funny. The guy they really ought to worry about collapsing or dying is Mr. Four Heart Attacks Cheney. But he seems to be able to skim in and out of undisclosed locations without the press corps reporting on his every move.

If a President were shot in the woods (not that I'm advocating that) and no one was there, would the White House still be able to produce shameless propaganda?