

ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES AND THE POLICE STATE

Two things have caught my eye this morning. The first is a report out of Denver about a group of four that have been arrested in a supposed plot to kill Obama. From the AFP:

US authorities were Tuesday investigating an alleged plot to kill Barack Obama as he claims the Democratic nomination later this week in Denver, after four people were arrested with a haul of weapons.

...

The plot was unraveled Sunday after a police officer spotted a truck driving erratically in a suburb of Denver, Colorado where the four-day convention is being held. "The sergeant discovered inside his truck a bullet proof vest, two rifles, ammunition, walkie talkies and drugs," Aurora police detective Marcus Dudley told reporters.

"Additional information was then developed which led to the arrest of others." The suspects were being held on drugs and weapons charges while the alleged plot was being investigated by the US Secret Service which protects the US president and White House candidates and the FBI and the joint terrorism task force.

One of the men arrested had to be taken to hospital after he jumped out of a sixth floor hotel room window in an attempt to flee police, Dudley said.

A fortuitous traffic stop for "erratic driving" just flat out screams "pretext stop". I will be

shocked beyond belief if they had not been onto these guys through other means prior to the traffic stop. It is very hard to fathom that this all came out of a simple traffic stop. What exactly is "erratic driving" anyway? Speeding? Weaving? A bad turn? Red light violation? How did they come to magically search the vehicle from a mere traffic ticket stop? Are the Aurora cops doing a full felony inventory vehicle search on every traffic ticket they issue? How did they get to a hotel search where a guy is jumping out of a window so quickly? Naw, there is something else at play here, you can just smell it.

The next incident involves the scene in Minneapolis for the Republican National Convention. Hey, never let it be said that I am not fair and balanced. From Laura Flanders on the FDL front page:

"Our colleagues at the Glass Bead Collective, a group of video artists and documentarians, are in the Twin Cities to prepare for the Republican National Convention. They were swarmed by three police cars, detained and had all of their electronic gear, including laptop computers, videocameras and personal items were taken from them by Minneapolis police. No one was arrested. The stop and seizure was explained by police officers as related to Homeland Security and the Republican Convention."

No one wants any harm to come to Obama, and similarly, the GOP convention should be free from incident too. But when you reflect back on the wiretapping powers that we know have been ratified by Ms. Pelosi and our Congress, the mass information gathering and sharing as described in FISA Redux: Slippery Slope Part I and Part II, not to mention this report on databasing, you have to wonder about how heavy of a hand is at work around these conventions; not to mention the country in general. At what point have we given up too much to the police

state for the last incremental bit of security
and safety?