

THE FEAR-MONGERING TO SILENCE THE AIG EMPLOYEES

The memo AIG sent to employees offering safety tips might lead you to believe that AIG is concerned about its employees' safety. And, true, it offers really practical advice about how to limit the chances that someone is going to attack an AIG employee: hide your badge, alert security if people are hanging around.

I do hope AIG employees—and all the banksters—remain safe.

But there's one fact that suggests this memo is simply a scare tactic.

Edward Liddy, someone who has been on TV as the public face of AIG, took the train to DC for his testimony.

Whatever Liddy's personal record — he is taking \$1 in salary this year without a bonus and took the train to Washington for the hearing — lawmakers didn't stop in their quest for the names.

If you are genuinely concerned about the safety of your employees, you do not let the most public of those employees take public transportation on a widely-publicized trip.

So I would suggest that the warnings from AIG might serve a completely different purpose (aside from instilling a sense of defensiveness that might draw employees closer together). Consider this warning, for example, ostensibly designed to keep employees safe:

Avoid public conversations involving AIG and do not engage any media personnel regarding the company.

You see, all but a few of the warnings AIG gave

its employees have a dual effect: they remind employees to guard their personal safety (and I do hope they remain safe). But they also ensure that anyone trying to report on AIG will be regarded as a physical threat.

And the net effect of such fear-mongering is articles like this one, in which the employees at the highest risk AIGFP employees quoted as being concerned about their privacy and safety (in an article, funnily enough, that provides names and towns of residence), **are ignoring the guidelines AIG gave them on protecting themselves**. They are talking to the press!!!!

But I'm guessing that's not exactly what happened—that Jackpot Jimmy somehow ignored the warnings and instead decided to gab to the press. You see, I find it rather curious that the two AIGFP employees described in the article—Jackpot Jimmy and Douglas Poling, the latter of whom got the biggest bonus—are now returning those bonuses. I find it rather remarkable that NYT happened to find employees who can be made to look like good guys here, rather than the ones who are still holding the US taxpayer hostage to get their bonuses. Particularly given that NYT also spoke to an official spokesperson for the article, you don't suppose that AIG picked which employees the NYT would use to represent the plight of AIG's employees, do you? (And how did NYT figure out who got the biggest bonuses, since Andrew Cuomo hasn't released those names yet?)

If AIG has made its employees afraid to speak to the press, then it gives AIG a great deal of leeway to choose which employees will be the public face of this scandal.

And the fearmongering serves to ensure that those who might have real details about the shitpiles at AIG—the ones who might not be trusted to hide the company's secrets—don't talk to the press.