

# FROOMKIN'S SINS OF THE VILLAGE

As you've heard by now, that beacon of sanity at the WaPo during the Bush years, Dan Froomkin, just got canned. I've been puzzling through what Dan might mean with his statement,

I'm terribly disappointed. I was told that it had been determined that my White House Watch blog wasn't 'working' anymore. But from what I could tell, it was still working very well," Froomkin said. "I also thought White House Watch was a great fit with The Washington Post brand, and what its readers reasonably expect from the Post online.

I think that the future success of our business depends on journalists enthusiastically pursuing accountability and calling it like they see it. That's what I tried to do every day," he continued. "I'm not sure at this point what I'm going to do next. I may take White House Watch elsewhere, or may try something different.

And I keep coming back to his emphasis on "pursuing accountability." So I decided to review a selection of Dan's most recent columns to see what he might mean by that:

Spending Jitters Don't Change the Fundamentals

The Amazing Shrinking Regulatory Overhaul

Obama's New Road Rules May Fall Short

Consolation Prize for Gays

Push Back, Mr. President

Who's Reading Your E-Mail?

The Foot-Dragging Continues

Baking Transparency Into Government

Good Questions From a Senator and an Activist

Bush's Red Ink, Obama's Problem

Too Embarrassing to Disclose?

Crunch Time for Health Care

How Cheney Bent DOJ to His Will

Renouncing Bush's Worldview

Obama's Big Health Care Test

Obama Getting 'Honest' With Israel

Cheney Watch

The Accidental CEO

And there was an interesting exchange in a live chat earlier in the week where Dan complained that "more news organizations haven't put top reporters on [the wiretap story] (and the torture story) and told them not to let go until they've gotten to the bottom of everything."

Aside from Froomkin's sheer productivity (particularly as compared to his colleague, Dana Milbank, who complains about writing 3-4 750 word columns a week), these posts reveal certain things. On some issues—torture and wiretapping—Froomkin is increasingly critical, particularly as to Obama's "schizophrenia" regarding "transparency." On financial, health care, and foreign policy issues, Dan has been balanced—critical at times, but definitely appreciative of the complexity of Obama's task and his successes there. And of course, he's still beating up Bush and Cheney.

And that, apparently, is enough to get you fired from the Village rag.

To my mind, Glenn Greenwald has the best take on this so far.

All of this underscores a critical and

oft-overlooked point: what one finds virtually nowhere in the establishment press are those who criticize Obama not in order to advance their tawdry right-wing agenda but because the principles that led them to criticize Bush compel similar criticism of Obama.

Sure, Froomkin's critical. He's critical in serious ways—perhaps more serious than his criticisms of Bush. But they are—as Glenn said—principled.

Is that what gets you fired in the Village these days? Adhering to principle over party?l