

NO WONDER THEY HIRED ANDY COULSON

Amid news that News Corp is playing games with its BSkyB bid (and even that Murdoch might sell News International entirely), the Guardian reports that Gordon Brown, like everyone else in England it seems, was hacked by “journalists across News International.”

Journalists from across News International repeatedly targeted the former prime minister Gordon Brown, attempting to access his voicemail and obtaining information from his bank account, his legal file as well as his family’s medical records.

[snip]

Separately, Brown’s tax paperwork was taken from his accountant’s office apparently by hacking into the firm’s computer. This was passed to another newspaper.

Brown was targeted during a period of more than 10 years, both as chancellor of the exchequer and as prime minister. Some of the activity clearly was illegal. Other incidents breached his privacy but not the law.

So here’s a question I’m mystified that no one is asking.

A couple of Liberal Democrats are now reporting that, after having received non-public briefings on Andy Coulson’s role in the hacking scandal, they warned David Cameron not to hire Coulson as his spokesperson. But Cameron ignored those warnings.

The crisis engulfing David Cameron over phone hacking deepened on Saturday as Paddy Ashdown revealed that he had warned No 10 only days after the general

election of “terrible damage” to the coalition if he employed Andy Coulson in Downing Street.

The former Liberal Democrat leader, who had been extensively briefed on details that had not been made public for legal reasons, was so convinced that the truth would eventually emerge that he contacted the prime minister’s office.

Ashdown, a key player as the Liberal Democrats agonised over whether to join in a coalition with the Tories, told the *Observer* that, based on what he had been told, it was obvious Coulson’s appointment as Cameron’s director of communications would be a disaster.

“I warned No 10 within days of the election that they would suffer terrible damage if they did not get rid of Coulson, when these things came out, as it was inevitable they would,” he said.

Isn’t it possible that Cameron insisted on hiring Coulson **because** of his role in the scandal? That is, is it possible that, either before or after the election, Coulson shared some of this intelligence—which we know included personal information about Gordon Brown—with the Tories for political advantage?