

SPREADING FREE “TRADE” TO COLOMBIA BUT NOT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

So the guys who were supposed to be scouting threats to the President got in trouble because they [tried to shortchange](#) a sex worker of her fair payment. I guess the lesson these men took from our trade deal with Colombia is that it's okay to pay people there cut-rate wages.

That's troubling enough, but I'm actually more interested in some details this scandal has revealed about our attitude towards the press. For example, apparently Colombia asked the Secret Service to prevent a left wing journalist from covering the summit. (h/t scribe)

The only specific security concern mentioned was that agents and officers were told to bar a left-wing journalist from events at the summit and were given a flier with the journalist's photograph to keep him out, the law enforcement source said.

Then there's the news that the US government [instructed](#) Cartagena's cops not to talk about the events of that night.

The police have since been directed by U.S. authorities not to comment on that night or the scandal surrounding the Secret Service, according to a senior police official in Cartagena.

The story suggests—but does not affirm—that the instructions to hotel staffers to lie about whether they were present during the scandal was done at the behest of the US.

Like the police, the staff at the hotel have been instructed by their management

not to comment on the men's behavior. Workers at the hotel tell ABC News they have been told to say they were "off," "on vacation," or "working a different shift" when asked about what went on at the hotel.

Now I presume the government pretends that all these efforts to impede the press are about security. Can't let a FARC-friendly journalist cover the President because she might learn details of the President's schedule. Can't let the true details about our security personnel's debauchery out because it might make them target for blackmail.

But taken with other [recent events](#), it increasingly seems that the folks running the American Empire consider full press coverage to be one of the biggest threats to its existence.