

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, TUNISIA, AND WIKILEAKS

Update: BBC and al-Jazeera report that Ben Ali has left the country and security forces have arrested family members at the airport.

The simultaneous (and related) unfolding of the uprising in Tunisia and the latest Wikileaks events reveals a great deal about our own country's support for democracy.

If you aren't already, I recommend you follow @abuaardvark (aka Mark Lynch) so long as this crisis in Tunisia lasts. Not only is Lynch following the up-to-the-minute events closely on Twitter—such as the news that dictator Zine el Abidine Ben Ali just sacked his government and will hold elections six months from now. But he also has chronicled the strange silence about this popular uprising in the US, particularly among the NeoCons who used democracy promotion as their excuse to launch an illegal war in Iraq.

Barely a month goes by without a *Washington Post* editorial bemoaning Egypt's authoritarian retrenchment and criticizing the Obama administration's alleged failure to promote Arab democracy. But now Tunisia has erupted as the story of the year for Arab reformers. The spiraling protests and the regime's heavy-handed, but thus far ineffective, repression have captured the imagination of Arab publics, governments, and political analysts. Despite Tunis's efforts to censor media coverage, images and video have made it out onto social media and up to Al Jazeera and other satellite TV. The "Tunisia scenario" is now the term of art for activist hopes and government fears of political instability and mass

protests from Jordan to Egypt to the Gulf.

[snip]

Perhaps they've had nothing to say simply because there has been little coverage of Tunisia in the Western media, and the United States has few interests or leverage in Tunis, making it a marginal issue for U.S. political debate. Tunisia is not generally on the front burner in American thinking about the Middle East. It's far away from Israel, Iraq, and the Gulf, and plays little role in the headline strategic issues facing the U.S. in the region. Despite being one of the most repressive and authoritarian regimes in the region, Tunisia has generally been seen as a model of economic development and secularism. Its promotion of women's rights and crushing of Islamist opposition has taken priority in the West over its near-complete censorship of the media and blanket domination of political society. Indeed, the United States has cared so little about Tunisia's absolute rejection of democracy and world-class censorship that it chose it for the regional office of MEPI, the Bush administration's signature democracy promotion initiative.

This is understandable, but hardly satisfying. I can understand the hesitation of U.S. *officials* to take a strong position on the side of either the protesters or the regime at this point, given the strategic complexities and the implications of taking any rhetorical stance. To my ears, at least, the U.S. message has been muddled, with some officials seeming to take the side of the protesters and warning against too-harsh repression and others seeming

to avoid taking a stance. For what it's worth, I told a State Department official in a public forum yesterday that the absence of major U.S. interests in Tunisia and the real prospect of change there make it a good place for the Obama administration to take a principled stand in favor of public freedoms and against repression.

Click through for his update—a response to a WaPo column regarding such populist uprising as a threat.

With Lynch's comments in mind, consider two different versions of the role of Wikileaks in this uprising.

Elizabeth Dickinson has a piece that—perhaps too strongly—calls Wikileaks “a trigger and a tool for political outcry” in Tunisia.

Tunisia's government doesn't exactly get a flattering portrayal in the leaked State Department cables. The country's ruling family is described as “The Family” – a mafia-esque elite who have their hands in every cookie jar in the entire economy. “President Ben Ali is aging, his regime is sclerotic and there is no clear successor,” a June 2009 cable reads. And to this kleptocracy there is no recourse; one June 2008 cable claims: “persistent rumors of corruption, coupled with rising inflation and continued unemployment, have helped to fuel frustration with the GOT [government of Tunisia] and have contributed to recent protests in southwestern Tunisia. With those at the top believed to be the worst offenders, and likely to remain in power, there are no checks in the system.”

Of course, Tunisians didn't need anyone to tell them this. But the details noted in the cables – for example, the fact

that the first lady may have made massive profits off a private school – stirred things up. Matters got worse, not better (as surely the government hoped), when WikiLeaks was blocked by the authorities and started seeking out dissidents and activists on social networking sites.

As PayPal and Amazon learned last year, WikiLeaks' supporters don't take kindly to being denied access to the Internet. And the hacking network Anonymous launched an operation, OpTunisia, against government sites "as long as the Tunisian government keep acting the way they do," an Anonymous member told the *Financial Times*.

Compare that the very weird logic State Department Spokesperson Philip Crowley uses in his speech to a class on media and politics the other day.

No one is a greater advocate for a **vibrant independent and responsible press**, committed to the promotion of freedom of expression and development of a true global civil society, than the United States. Every day, **we express concern about the plight of journalists (or bloggers) around the world who are intimidated, jailed or even killed** by governments that are afraid of their people, and afraid of the empowerment that comes with the free flow of information within a civil society.

Most recently, we did so in the context of Tunisia, which has hacked social media accounts while claiming to protect their citizens from the incitement of violence. But in doing so, we feel the government is unduly restricting the ability of its people to peacefully assemble and express their views in order to influence government policies.

These are universal principles that we continue to support. **And we practice what we preach.** Just look at our own country and cable television. We don't silence dissidents. We make them television news analysts.

Some in the human rights community in this country, and around the world, are questioning our commitment to freedom of expression, freedom of the press and Internet freedom in the aftermath of WikiLeaks. I am constrained in what I can say, both because individual cables remain classified, and the leak is under investigation by the Department of Justice. But let me briefly put this in context and then I will open things up for questions. WikiLeaks is about the unauthorized disclosure of classified information. It is not an exercise in Internet freedom. **It is about the legitimate investigation of a crime. It is about the need to continue to protect sensitive information while enabling the free flow of public information.** [my emphasis]

He sort of wanders back and forth between a discussion of press freedom and an insistence that persecution of Wikileaks is not a violation of that principle through the rest of his speech, at one point drawing a bizarre analogy between Coke's secret formula and Google's search algorithms and the US' diplomatic secrets, as if our diplomatic secrets are the essence of our identity.

Maybe that was his point.

I find Crowley's statement in the quoted passage interesting for several reasons. First, there's the odd non sequitur from Tunisia to Wikileaks, perhaps suggesting some unspoken agreement on Crowley's part with Dickinson's assertion that Wikileaks had an affirmative role in fostering this expression of civil society.

But note, too, how Crowley conflates what this speech is supposed to be about—journalism, the Fourth Estate, big-P press, and only the “responsible press” at that—and social media. He says, first, that our country expresses concern about the plight of journalists and bloggers (he doesn’t except journalists from Reuters or al-Jazeera, though he should, considering how many of them we’ve targeted or killed). Those would mostly qualify as “press.” But then he says the State Department has expressed concern about Tunisia, too. And even he admits that Tunisia attempted its suppression of any discussions about the uprising by **hacking social media accounts**.

Not only does it make the target something different from Crowley’s “responsible press,” but it seems our government has zero ground to stand on in condemning a government’s efforts to use hacking—including DDoS attacks—to prevent its citizens from reading content it finds dangerous (not to mention more old-fashioned efforts at repression, such as shutting down server and funding access).

And from there, conflating “responsible press” and the social media-assisted citizen activism in Tunisia, Crowley then attempts to redefine what Wikileaks is about, distinguishing between the “responsible press” and social media-assisted activism and “the legitimate investigation of a crime” and “the need to continue to protect sensitive information.”

Now, for most of the rest of Crowley’s discussion of Wikileaks, he focuses on the first of the two things he tries to redefine WL as: the investigation of the leak, not admitting the difference between investigating Manning’s alleged leak of the information and investigating Assange’s role in publishing it.

We are a nation of laws, and the laws of our country have been violated. Since we function under the rule of law, it is appropriate and necessary that we investigate and prosecute those who have

violated U.S law. Some have suggested that the ongoing investigation marks a retreat from our commitment to freedom of expression, freedom of the press and Internet freedom. Nonsense.

That's safer ground for Crowley. After all, the US' profoundly undemocratic response to Wikileaks extends not just to investigating and prosecuting Manning and Assange, but also to doing everything in its power to hinder Wikileaks' publication of the material it already has, including, just like the government of Tunisia, hacking Wikileaks' website.

Sure, the government has covered its tracks: We can't prove the US government is the entity that launched DDos attacks on WL. Lieberman has accepted the blame for persuading Amazon to shut down WL's US-based server. Paypal and various banks have explained they just shut down WL's use of their respective services out of a seemingly independent desire to interpret their own service agreements in ways that precluded working with WL.

But does anyone doubt that the government was behind all of this?

How odd, Mark Lynch rightly finds it, that our government and pundits have been so silent about the challenge to authoritarianism in Tunisia. But for those, like Crowley, focusing on Tunisia's technical repression of activists (as opposed to the physical repression of it), that question really could just as well be focused closer to home.

ROBERT GIBBS TO LEAVE

WHITE HOUSE, WILL JOIN “PROFESSIONAL LEFT”



Robert Gibbs has made it official: he's leaving the White House. (Applause!!!)

Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary and close confidante to President Obama, said Wednesday that he will step down and become an outside political adviser to the president and his re-election campaign.

[snip]

Mr. Gibbs will remain part of the president's inner circle of political advisers, along with David Axelrod, a senior adviser and Jim Messina, a deputy chief of staff, who also are leaving the White House to focus on the president's re-election effort. Mr. Gibbs will defend Mr. Obama on television – and **will expand his presence on Twitter and other Internet platforms** – as well as beginning to define the field of 2012 Republican presidential candidates.

“Stepping back will take some adjusting,” Mr. Gibbs said in an interview Wednesday morning. “But at the same time, I have a feeling that I will keep myself quite busy, not just with speaking, but continuing to help the president.”

He said he has no intention of establishing a political consulting or lobbying business, but he **intends to work from the same downtown Washington office** where David Plouffe has spent the last two years. Mr. Plouffe, who was Mr. Obama's campaign manager, will move to the White House and work as a senior adviser to the president.

Mr. Gibbs, who has worked in political campaigns, on Capitol Hill or at the White House for his entire career, said he also **plans to try out the speaking circuit this year.** [my emphasis]

Back when Gibbs was attacking the Professional Left, he made a distinction between the Progressives outside of DC and those inside DC squawking on the cable programs.

But if Gibbs is going to stay in DC, hanging out on Twitter, and appearing on the speaking circuit, doesn't that make him a card-carrying member of the Professional Left?

Except the bit about him being so conservative, of course.

OMB'S NEW SECURITY MEMO SUGGESTS WIKILEAKS IS MEDIA

A number of outlets are reporting on the OMB memo requiring agencies to review their security procedures in response to WikiLeaks.

Now, this memo is explicitly a response to WikiLeaks. It's a follow-up on a memo sent in November that names WikiLeaks.

On November 28, 2010, departments and agencies that handle classified national security information were directed to establish assessment teams to review their implementation of safeguarding procedures. (Office of Management and Budget, Memorandum M-11-06, "WikiLeaks – Mishandling of Classified Information," November 28, 2010.)

And one of the questions it directs agencies to ask names WikiLeaks (and, in a sign of the government's nimbleness, OpenLeaks) specifically.

Do you capture evidence of pre-employment and/or post-employment activities or participation in on-line media data mining sites like WikiLeaks or Open Leaks?

But the delay—almost six months between Bradley Manning's arrest and the November memo, and another month until this memo, sort of reminds me of the roughly eight month delay between the time Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab tried to set his underwear on fire and the the time a bunch of grannies started getting groped at TSA security checkpoints.

Why the delay?

And from a document usability standpoint, this list of questions designed to help agencies identify weaknesses is a piece of shit. Trust me. No matter how good a bureaucrat is, asking them to use nine pages of nested bullets to improve a process is not going to work. This is simply not a credible process improvement effort.

I also wonder why it took WikiLeaks to initiate this effort. Just as an example, Los Alamos National Labs has been losing both storage media, computers, and BlackBerries going back a decade. You'd think the vulnerability of one of our nuclear labs would alert the government to our overall vulnerability to the loss of data via computer medium. Yet losing data to—presumably—our enemies did not trigger this kind of no-nonsense vulnerability assessment, WikiLeaks did.

The Russians and the Chinese are probably bummed that WikiLeaks will make it a teeny bit harder for them to spy on us.

All that said, Steven Aftergood makes one

curious observation about the memo: this unusable list of nested bullets suggests that agencies should monitor employees' contacts with the media.

Among other troubling questions, agencies are asked: "Are all employees required to report their contacts with the media?" This question seems out of place since there is no existing government-wide security requirement to report "contacts with the media." Rather, this is a security policy that is unique to some intelligence agencies, and is not to be found in any other military or civilian agencies. Its presence here seems to reflect the new "evolutionary pressure" on the government to adopt the stricter security policies of intelligence.

"I am not aware of any such requirement" to report on media contacts, a senior government security official told Secrecy News. But he noted that the DNI was designated as Security Executive Agent for personnel security matters in the 2008 executive order 13467. As a result, "I suspect that an IC requirement crept in" to the OMB memo.

I agree with Aftergood: it is troubling that an intelligence community requirement now seems to be applied to the federal workforce as a whole.

But isn't this, at the same time, rather telling?

If a memo instituting new security reviews, explicitly written in response to WikiLeaks, institutes a policy of reviewing contacts with the media, doesn't that suggest they consider WikiLeaks to **be** media?

FOUR WORDS YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SEE TOGETHER AGAIN

"Judith" "Miller" "Embedded" "Iraq"

By Judith Miller

It was the suicide vest that clinched it.

John C. Myers, a veteran law enforcement officer embedded in the U.S. Army's 1st Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq's Anbar province, was certainly familiar with the outlawed amphetamine Captagon.

The bonus word that makes it all the more amusing?

"Newsmax"

GAWKER COUGHS UP A MISLEADING HAIRBALL ON BRADLEY MANNING

Gawker has published a misleading and uninformed article on the detention conditions of Bradley Manning; the truth is that he is presumed innocent and being held pre-trial, not a convicted criminal being punished.

WILL WIKILEAKS BE THE INTERNET'S TITANIC?

✖ Back in the early days of radio, there was a great amateur radio culture that in key ways resembled early internet culture: it was predominantly male, highly competent, espousing a belief that this new technology could democratize the world.

And in spite of the amateur radio community's offer to set up an alternative communication system in the country—one that would provide a horizontal communication network in case the more centralized one failed in time of crisis—the powers that be were none too comfortable with the radio guys. Partly, it was just about decentralization of power. Partly, it was that the amateur operators were technically more skilled than the radio operators in the employ of the Navy.

And then the Titanic happened.

And in spite of the fact that the disaster had a lot more to do with hubris and incompetence and negligence, the amateur operators provided a handy scapegoat, based on the weak claim that amateur operators had hogged bandwidth that rescuers might have used. More importantly, the amateurs offered not only a convenient scapegoat, but the Titanic provided a wonderful opportunity to go after the radio guys, the fearmongering excuse to curtail the power of the operators, which the government did with bandwidth restrictions and a national regime covering broadcast, among other measures. Which launched the process that resulted in the top-down broadcast model offered by Westinghouse and CBS rather than the democratized horizontal network of people speaking in their own voices that might have been.

I've been waiting for our Titanic moment—the moment when the government would use some convenient excuse to shut down the imperfect but

still better than broadcast model of the Internet. The moment when—as the government did with the Titanic and its demand for Navy hegemony of the airwaves—the government could sow fears about national security to shut down citizen media.

And as I was reading this post from Ian Welsh...

Let's just state the obvious here: we're seeing the end of the open internet with what is being done to WikiLeaks. It's one thing for Amazon to toss them, it's another thing entirely to refuse to propagate their domain information. This has been coming for quite some time, and WikiLeaks is not the first domain to be shut down in the US, it is merely the highest profile. Combined with the attempt to make Netflix pay a surcharge or lose access to customers, this spells the end of the free internet.

The absurdity, the sheer Orwellian stupidity of this is epitomized by Hilary Clinton telling students at elite colleges not to read the leaks, or they won't get jobs at State. As if anyone who isn't curious to read what is in the leaks, who doesn't want to know how diplomacy actually works, is anyone State should hire. In a sane world, the reaction would be the opposite: no one who hadn't read them would be hired.

This is reminiscent of the way the old Soviet Union worked, with everyone being forced to pretend they don't know what they absolutely do know, and blind conformity prized over ability.

And as I contemplate Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski's fake net neutrality proposal, and as I read news of MasterCard and Visa both freezing Julian Assange's funds, I can't help but think this is

the Titanic moment I've been expecting for years.

Sure, the crackdown—which puts our counterterrorism efforts to shame—is a response to the scope of this latest leak. Sure, it's an attempt to prevent the next leak, on Bank of America.

But just as much, it's about creating the excuse they need—the government and the legacy media protecting their turf—to undercut the power of the Internet.

HOW MUCH MORE FORECLOSURE FRAUD IS UNDER SEAL?

The NYT has a fascinating story about the \$75,000 house that led to the GMAC deposition on robo signing that finally alerted the world to the extent of the fraud behind foreclosures. It's worth reading for the description of Thomas Cox, a lawyer who volunteers at legal assistance to make right for his years of doing foreclosures, the description of the errors GMAC made even after the court started looking closely, and the detail that GMAC has now spent more on legal fees trying to foreclose on this house than the house itself is worth.

But I'm particularly interested in this:

Mr. Cox vowed to a colleague that he would expose GMAC's process and its limited signing officer, Jeffrey Stephan. A lawyer in another foreclosure case had already deposed Mr. Stephan, but Mr. Cox wanted to take the questioning much further. In June, he got his chance. A few weeks later, he spelled out in a court filing what he

had learned from the robo-signer:

"When Stephan says in an affidavit that he has personal knowledge of the facts stated in his affidavits, he doesn't. When he says that he has custody and control of the loan documents, he doesn't. When he says that he is attaching 'a true and accurate' copy of a note or a mortgage, he has no idea if that is so, because he does not look at the exhibits. When he makes any other statement of fact, he has no idea if it is true. When the notary says that Stephan appeared before him or her, he didn't."

GMAC's reaction to the deposition was to hire two new law firms, including Mr. Aromando's firm, among the most prominent in the state. They argued that what Mrs. Bradbury and her lawyers were doing was simply a "dodge": she had not paid her mortgage and should be evicted.

They also said that Mr. Cox, despite working pro bono, had taken the deposition "to prejudice and influence the public" against GMAC for his own commercial benefit. **They asked that the transcript be deleted from any blog that had posted it and that it be put under court seal.** [my emphasis]

GMAC's first response to this affidavit was a request to the judge to prevent it from being posted to the Toobz (presumably 4closureFraud.org). But the judge refused.

Stephan's deposition was taken to advance a legitimate purpose, and the testimony elicited has direct probative value to this dispute. Attorney Cox did not himself take action other than to share the deposition with an attorney in Florida. That the testimony reveals corporate practices that GMAC finds

embarrassing is not enough to justify issuance of a protective order. Further, Plaintiff has failed to establish that GMAC has been harmed specifically as a result of the dissemination of the June 7, 2010 deposition transcript, given that similarly embarrassing deposition testimony from Stephan's December 10, 2009 Florida deposition also appears on the Internet, and will remain even were this Court to grant Plaintiff's motion. Accordingly, because Plaintiff has failed to satisfy its burden of persuasion under Rule 26(c), its Motion for Entry of Protective Order is denied.

There are, we are learning, depositions all over the country showing that servicer employees committed outright fraud. But presumably, every time they're taken, the servicer attempts to hide them behind claims of trade secrets.

How much more evidence of corporate law-breaking is hiding in foreclosure courts under seal?

LIMP DAILY CALLER ATTACKS JOURNALIST (AGAIN) AND SPENCER ACKERMAN

About a month ago, the semi-irrelevant "FishbowlDC" and Tucker Carlson's self indulgent sandbox "Daily Caller" impressed themselves by scalping Dave Weigel from his position at the Washington Post. Fresh off the closest thing to a victory these folks may ever achieve, they have attempted to replicate their recently past glory by pulling the same cheap stunt with more purloined emails from the now defunct

"Journalist", with the biggest dagger in the back aimed at Spencer Ackerman, noted national security reporter now with Wired's Danger Room Blog and his own site Attackerman right here at Firedoglake.

It was the moment of greatest peril for then-Sen. Barack Obama's political career. In the heat of the presidential campaign, videos surfaced of Obama's pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, angrily denouncing whites, the U.S. government and America itself. Obama had once bragged of his closeness to Wright. Now the black nationalist preacher's rhetoric was threatening to torpedo Obama's campaign.

.....

Watching this all at home were members of Journalist, a listserv comprised of several hundred liberal journalists, as well as like-minded professors and activists. The tough questioning from the ABC anchors left many of them outraged. "George [Stephanopoulos]," fumed Richard Kim of the Nation, is "being a disgusting little rat snake."

....

In one instance, Spencer Ackerman of the Washington Independent urged his colleagues to deflect attention from Obama's relationship with Wright by changing the subject. Pick one of Obama's conservative critics, Ackerman wrote, "Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares – and call them racists."

Michael Tomasky, a writer for the Guardian, also tried to rally his fellow members of Journalist: "Listen folks—in my opinion, we all have to do what we can to kill ABC and this idiocy in whatever venues we have. This isn't about defending Obama. This is about how the [mainstream media] kills any chance

of discourse that actually serves the people.”

That’s it?? So this is the Daily Caller’s claim to fame? Raison d’etre? This is the best and brightest they have to offer? Apparently so, and they are proud of it since they are going to the same putrid well of long dead private emails again so eagerly. What a bunch of cowardly limp dicks.

Spencer Ackerman and his friends on Journalist saw a wrong being committed in a craven political dirty play and discussed a way to right the wrong. If Daily Caller thinks that is controversial and worthy of a featured expose, they must be awfully hard up over there.

The subject attack by the right on Jeremiah Wright during the 2008 election, just as Ackerman and his fellow journalists discussed, was indeed a malicious and dishonest smear. The argument was made at the time perfectly by my and Spencer’s colleague John Chandley (aka “Scarecrow”):

Everyone should watch Bill Moyers’ Journal interview of Jeremiah Wright, including extended excerpts of the sermons whose out of context snippets have been played relentlessly on our televisions.

America’s media, and especially Fox News, MSNBC’s morning joes and others, have outrageously defamed a highly regarded theologian and righteous man. And by association, they’ve defamed an entire congregation – an “attack on the Black Church,” as Reverend Wright said this morning – and a respected branch of Christian theology, all because the Republican right wing wants to smear a Democratic candidate for President. It’s time for what’s left of the responsible media to condemn the smears and apologize for this journalistic

travesty.

Some of the most controversial sound bites are snippets from Wright's sermon on the Sunday after 9/11, when every religious leader in the country struggled to help their congregations deal with the evil that had just occurred. How could they make sense of such evil?

Reverend Wright chose his text from Psalms Chapter 137, a lament from the Old Testament written thousands of years ago by those who understood the meaning of suffering, of the horrors of war and the struggle for liberation from oppression and slavery.

Read the rest of the post, it is the gospel. Or take a gander at the words of another of our colleagues, Peterr, himself a man of the cloth:

Let me start with some disclosure: I know Jeremiah Wright. I've worshiped at Trinity United Church of Christ a time or two. I've heard Wright speak at clergy conferences. I've had a couple of one-on-one conversations with him.

With that said . . . Oh, that man can preach. But as any preacher will tell you, it helps if people would listen. As a preacher with some 20+ years of my own experience in the pulpit, I shudder to think what would happen if some of my sermons were snipped and sliced and diced in the same manner as those of Jeremiah Wright.

The most lamentable aspect of the way Wright has been swift-boated is the manner in which his critics snipped his quotes out of context.

The whole smear of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright was a standard play from the right wing noise

machine at the outset, but was then aided and abetted by a gullible and manufactured controversy craven and crazy main media eager to stir controversy to drive election viewership and ratings. It was a shameful and dishonest display, as was the subsequent kowtowing to it by Barack Obama.

You do not have to like Reverend Wright, you do not have to listen to him or go to his church. But the sheer opportunistic and despicable smearing of him for expressing in his passions and ministry, and in his own words and style, in the language of his decades long flock, the same outrage and questions being expressed in homes and churches all across the United States, was above and beyond the pale.

The small minded cheap shot artists at Tucker Carlson's Daily Caller want to restart the race baiting and dishonest segregationist belligerence again in order to seek attention for themselves; trying to grab Spencer Ackerman's scalp is just a bonus sideshow.

Nope. Not this time. Spencer may have been pointed when he made his comments on a private discussion forum long ago, but he was absolutely right. Moreover, and critically important to the discussion, Spencer said nothing different content wise in the private email forum Daily Caller and Breitbart seek to exploit than he has said publicly then or now, if perhaps in more formal words. Ackerman has maintained complete consistency on the subject, and does so to this day. The attackers of Reverend Jeremiah Wright were, and continue to be, race baiting disingenuous opportunists.

In the Weigel imbroglio, the Daily Caller rushed to defend Rush Limbaugh. Limbaugh, who proudly bellowed of Obama's association with Wright:

It is clear that Senator Obama has disowned his white half, that he's decided he's got to go all in on the black side.

....

He is not transcendent on race. Obama is telling us that he is a black American first and an American second.

That is race baiting, but it is what silver spooned bow tie boy Tucker Carlson and his fellow ~~journalists~~ noise makers at the Daily Caller earnestly defend while dishonestly attacking the likes of Jeremiah Wright, Spencer Ackerman and the others at Journalist.

And then there is Andrew Breitbart. Breitbart was so giddy to shoot another man in the back with the ill begotten email bullets, he started giddily Tweeting and drooling, before the Daily Caller article even came out, that the big expose would cost Spencer Ackerman his job and livelihood. Guess Breitbart needed a new diversion now that both a Congressional investigation *and* a criminal investigation by the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office exonerated ACORN and implicated O'Keefe and his co-conspirators (which of course include their leader Breitbart) in selective and false editing and presentation. Oh, not to mention that a third prosecutorial authority, the California Attorney General's Office has vindicated ACORN; from the San Diego Union Tribune:

In the ensuing torrent of national publicity that included other secret tapings at ACORN offices, Vera lost his job. The national community organizing group, which led voter registration drives and worked to help low-income people with housing and other issues, has disbanded.

The tapes of Vera had been heavily edited by O'Keefe, according to an investigation by the state Attorney General's Office. Footage had been spliced in of O'Keefe and Giles dressed as a pimp and prostitute to make it appear that is how they were dressed when talking to Vera, when actually they were not.

The attorney general's report concluded no wrongdoing by ACORN employees and said Vera had contacted his cousin, a National City police detective, with details of the conversation he had with O'Keefe and Giles. The report also strongly implied O'Keefe and Giles had violated state privacy laws, but they had been granted immunity in exchange for providing the unedited tapes.

So, while no less than three significant investigations and prosecutorial authorities have vindicated ACORN and inculpated Breitbart's employee and dirty trickster O'Keefe, Andrew Breitbart gets his jollies running around and tweeting that Spencer Ackerman should lose his job for being honest, consistent and standing up for what he believes in when he was confronted by un-American divisive race baiting. That is quite a double standard Breitbart carries.

But that is where we are today. Since Breitbart and the Daily Caller writers are so fond of discussing old private email discussions, I wonder if they would like to volunteer to produce all of *their* private discussions about the Reverend Jeremiah Wright they engaged in during the 2008 campaign. Of course, as their fraudulent splicing and editing of the ACORN tapes have demonstrated, you would not be able to trust their word as to accuracy. Perhaps a signed and sworn under oath and penalty of perjury affidavit would need to be appended; but what the heck boys, show us your work! Or shut up.

THE SARTORIAL

SPLENDOR OF NYTIMES PROFESSIONALS (MODO) AT WORK

Jim Risen castigates and slams bloggers with the tired and idiotic meme of being pajama clad dilettantes while fellow star New York Times journalists cover Federal court dressed as bag ladies. Go figure.

LANNY DAVIS FUDGES AND SHILLS HIS WAY THROUGH ANOTHER OP- ED

Lanny Davis has an op-ed up at The Hill calling on Barack Obama to “Sister Souljah” the progressive netroots. As if Obama has not done enough of that already. Davis can go Sister Souljah himself.