

BROADWELL'S DENVER APPEARANCE: DID SHE COVER PETRAEUS' BAD BRIEFS?

[youtube]<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W35dwmdGtig>[/youtube]

Update: Sadly, it appears that the University of Denver has become cowardly and withdrawn the video, but I'm leaving the embed language in the post just to show the folly of their action.

Update 2: And now it's back, but at a new URL. Embed should be restored (for the video, not Broadwell...)

There was a lot of discussion last night of the YouTube you see here, which shows Paula Broadwell in an October 26 appearance at the University of Denver. One of the better analyses of the appearance, along with a transcription of Broadwell's comments on the Benghazi incident, was written by Blake Hounshell of Foreign Policy.

I will leave it to others to discuss whether Broadwell disclosed classified information with her reference to the CIA holding two militia members or if she might have been confused on that point as Marcy suggests. I want to concentrate on two other points that jumped out to me regarding the appearance and what Broadwell said.

First, the appearance is at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies. As the school points out, it is named after Madeleine Albright's father and has a history of producing prominent graduates in international relations. However, this school also came to my attention early last year when I was researching Raymond Davis. I found that Davis had a history of previous addresses where he had lived in close proximity to university

programs such as the Josef Korbel school. In fact, I found that one of Davis' "business" operations even had a corporate officer who appeared to be a student at Josef Korbel. The information I found led me to believe that whatever his duties overseas, it seemed likely that Davis' duties while in the US may have been to recruit for the CIA and that graduate programs like this one were seen as prime recruiting grounds.

The second point I want to hit is how Broadwell described Petraeus' response after the Benghazi attack. From Hounshell's transcript (around 35 minutes into the video, as Hounshell points out):

The challenging thing for General Petraeus is that in his new position, he's not allowed to communicate with the press. So he's known all of this – they had correspondence with the CIA station chief in, in Libya. Within 24 hours they kind of knew what was happening.

But if you remember at the time – the Muslim video, the Mohamed video that came out, the demonstrations that were going on in Cairo – there were demonstrations in 22 other countries around the world. Tens of thousands of people. And our government was very concerned that this was going to become a nightmare for us.

So you can understand if you put yourself in his shoes or Secretary Clinton's shoes or the president's shoes that we thought it was tied somehow to the demonstrations in Cairo. And it's true that we have signal intelligence that shows the, um, the militia members in Libya were watching the demonstration in Cairo and it did sort of galvanize their effort. Um, so we'll find out the facts soon enough.

As a former intel officer it's

frustrating to me because it reveals our sources and methods. I don't think the public necessarily needs to know all of that. It is a tragedy that we lost an ambassador and two other government officials. Um, and something – there was a failure in the system because there was additional security requested. But it's frustrating to see the sort of political aspect of what's going on with this whole investigation.

I think it is appropriate and a good thing that Broadwell reminds the audience that there had been demonstrations (and she didn't even point out that some were violent) in over twenty countries that day and that those demonstrations did indeed seem to be in response to the anti-Mohammed video. However, the rest of what Broadwell said I think is misleading at best and is aimed at trying to deflect from the evidence that Petraeus gamed the way he briefed Congress and the White House on the incident.

Recall that I brought up back on October 19 that there was evidence that for nearly a week afterward, Petraeus continued to brief Congress and the White House that the attack was in response to the video when it has been established (as Broadwell reminds us) within 24 hours that the attack was planned and not a spontaneous video protest. So while Broadwell is right in saying that Petraeus couldn't share this information with the public, what she omits from her remarks is that Petraeus is obligated to share what he knows with Congress and the White House and that for a week after the attack, he was misleading both in what well may have been a political ploy aimed at providing an edge for Mitt Romney in the final stages of the election. That Broadwell would end this section of her remarks by lamenting the "politics" of the situation is pure hypocrisy.

Finally, the timeline for this appearance deserves some consideration. This recent article from the New York Times says that Broadwell was

first interviewed by the FBI "the week of October 21". The appearance is on October 26, so it is very likely she had already talked to the FBI (or at least knew that they wanted to talk to her) before this appearance. The same article says Petraeus was interviewed "the following week" although this post from Marcy presents evidence he may have been interviewed in the October 25-26 range.

In other words, it's almost a certainty that the FBI had interviewed Broadwell before she made this appearance in Denver. It appears that she had decided that her disclosure to the FBI that she had had an adulterous affair with the Director of the CIA was not going to interrupt her stated goal of one day becoming the National Security Adviser. While we can't fault her ambition, this behavior certainly seems to call her judgment into serious question.