

EPISODE THREE OF WHO RULES YOUR WORLD? BEGINS: THE LEAK RETRIBUTION EVENT

Episode one of Who Rules Your World?, pitting Barack Obama against Rupert Murdoch, passed mostly under the radar. The “privatize education” event ended in an early draw when the darling of both contestants, Michelle Rhee, resigned in disgrace for a cheating scandal. Though in truth, Murdoch’s loss of a big NY state contract (the contract opportunity arose out of Obama’s Race to the Top program) and Obama’s determination to continue his reforms using executive orders tips the balance to the President.

Episode two of Who Rules the World?, the illegal wiretap cover-up, has thus far been a clear Obama win. Within weeks after taking office, Obama reaffirmed the state secrets invocations of his predecessor. And while al-Haramain still fights to impose penalties in its successful case against the government, Obama has otherwise succeeded in shielding the government for any accountability for illegal wiretapping. Crucially, John Brennan, who had a role in the illegal wiretap program, has suffered no consequences for his role in the scandal.

Rupert’s son James has not enjoyed the same luck Brennan has. He had to resign from BSkyB to prevent News Corp’s hacking scandal from endangering the rest of the corporation’s business plans. Add in the substantial fines News Corp has already paid and the likelihood that a number of people involved in its illegal wiretap program will do jail time, and it’s clear that Obama has won the illegal wiretap coverup hands down.

Episode Three of Who Rules Your World?, leak retribution, might be more interesting. Sure,

the retribution against Jeff Sterling for his employment dispute with John Brennan and John Kiriakou for revealing members of the torture squads (a program Brennan also had ties to) are ongoing. But the case against Thomas Drake for exposing the graft involved in NSA's illegal wiretap contracts blew up in spectacular fashion; plus, the failure of the retribution against Drake has led to more revelations about the illegal wiretap program.

Meanwhile, we're just beginning to see how News Corp will respond to the efforts of Fox Mole, now exposed as Joe Muto, for passing embarrassing videos to Gawker. It will be particularly interesting to see how Fox balances retribution with a desire to prevent any more embarrassing revelations. Though of course, Fox is hampered because unlike Obama, he can't make Fox Mole unemployable by withdrawing his security clearance. Unlike national security whistleblowers, Muto's employment prospects probably just got a lot rosier, as other news outlets scramble to add to News Corp's discomfort.

It's probably just as well that Obama is winning *Who Rules Your World?* by such margins at this point. I wouldn't want Rupert to get smart ideas about trying to compete in the assassinations category.