

OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

The Behrend Beacon

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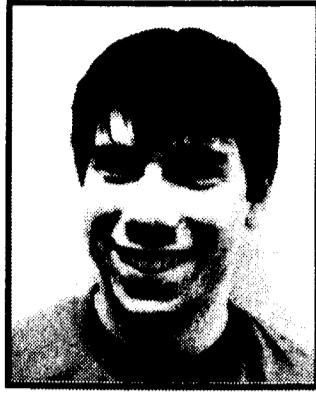


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This week in politics



By Chris Brown
copy editor

The past few weeks have given a rare glimpse into the inner-workings of the Bush administration after the U.S. attorney scandal hit the front page of newspapers and stayed there. Every day it seems new information is revealed and old statements issued by the administration to justify the dismissals of 8 U.S. attorneys are proven false.

The scandal started when eight U.S. attorneys were fired in 2006, seven on one day in December alone, and used an overlooked provision of the Patriot Act to appoint their replacements without Senate approval. Until the Patriot Act, every US attorney nominated by the President had to be approved by the Senate before they took office. The releases and appointments themselves do not constitute a breach of the law, but it did raise eyebrows when it was revealed that these

attorneys had stellar performance records and their replacements had little experience, if any at all, in the Justice Department or as federal prosecutors, usually a pre-requisite for a nomination.

At first the White House contended that the firings were performance related and that the Attorney General decided to fire the attorneys without any White House interference. Then it was revealed that all the dismissed attorneys, except one, had positive performance reviews and they were actually quite capable. Later the White House released hundreds of e-mails showing that Karl Rove's former aide, then Deputy Attorney General, had created a list ranking the attorneys based on their loyalty to Bush. After congressional testimony by the attorney it seems that some were ousted because they were either not indicting Democrats or they were indicting too many Republican lawmakers for bribery or corruption.

It is true that it is not against the law for the President, or Attorney General, to fire and hire US attorneys at their will, but what is against the law is to fire those attorneys to hinder investigations; that is obstruction of justice. The most interesting part of this scandal seems to be the way that the White House is handling the possible testimony of Karl Rove and other advisors. Congress wanted to interview his advisors under oath in order to get to the bottom of the story and

stop the constant shifts in stance by the Bush Administration. In response, Bush offered to let Rove and company to talk to congressmen privately, behind closed doors, and not be placed under oath in order to "prevent this turning into a political spectacle." Of course, and rightly so, Congress rejected this and both the House and Senate Judiciary panels authorized subpoenas for Bush's advisors, if issued they would be forced to testify under oath. Bush has vowed to resist the subpoenas and go to court, maintaining that forcing a President's advisors to testify would undermine the presidency and any advice given to the President (apparently that argument didn't apply when Tom Ridge, then Secretary of Homeland Security, testified to Congress in Bush's first term).

President Nixon was the last President to resist congressional subpoenas so staunchly, even taking his case to the Supreme Court where he eventually lost and was forced to hand over taped conversations proving his personal involvement in the Watergate scandal. Backroom briefings have only revealed that the administration has been lying all along. If Rove and company did nothing wrong then that would come out in their testimony and until there is documented testimony under oath in front of Congress, there will always be doubt surrounding the White House's role in the firing of the US attorneys. What is Bush so afraid of?

Letter to the Editor

I just wanted to share my thoughts and concerns with you that I have regarding the recent photos on the Opinion page. The first one that caught my attention pictured a young, obese, child at McDonalds with a caption thanking McDonalds for a lifetime of health problems due to their food. This is where I think there is a problem, blaming a company for a choice made by this child's parents. McDonald's food is great if you're low on cash and in a hurry. It's not so great for children to be eating it regularly enough for a child to get to this size. The problem though lies with the parents making bad decisions, not McDonalds for offering a product. It would be no different than a parent going to the grocery store and purchasing junk food for their child, as I'm sure is the case for this young child. The picture in the March 2nd paper is what really got to me though. You show a soldier searching what appears to be a member of the press, with a caption reading "Scissors beats paper",

which leads me to infer that this is an innocent member of the press being bullied by an over-zealous soldier. I had to infer that because a picture says 1000 words, all of them out of context. Why was the soldier searching the member of the press? Was the person in question really a member of the press? Was he just searched and let go, or was he detained? What if the reason he was being searched was local militant groups were using a disguise to pull off a bombing? In a situation that is nothing short of hell on earth, a soldier has to take every step to insure their safety and the safety of others. If you are going to continue this trend of showing photos with "witty" captions on them, I truly hope you give us the full story. Continuing to do this is only going to lower the opinion I and others think of you and your credibility. If you're only going half way with this part of your paper, what else are you cutting corners on?

-Seth Hummel



Jerry Pohl

Submission Guidelines

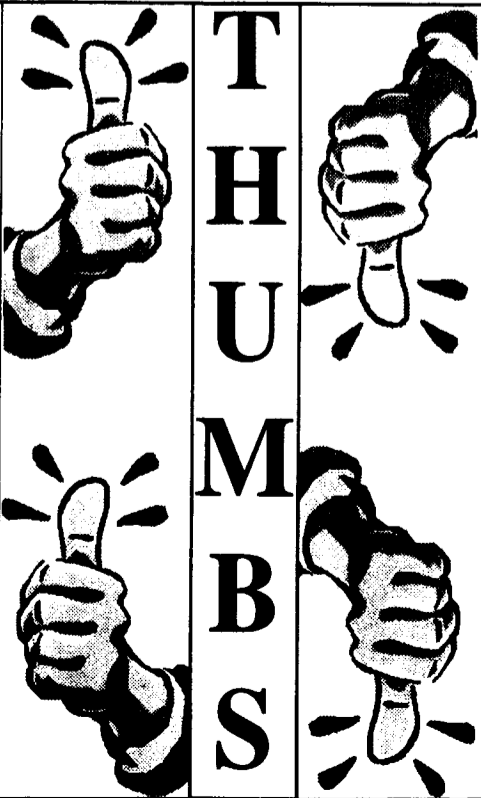
The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to jan219@psu.edu or directly to the Beacon office, located in the Reed Building.

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

All submissions must include the writer's year in school, major and name as The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue. All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication.

- The Beacon's personal Thursday night Janitor
- FAFSA season
- Dalton Trumbo
- NPR weekend jazz
- The Year Zero ARG
- www.theafternow.com
- The fiction of Sean Kennedy
- Stephen Colbert's Americone Dream
- Applying to colleges in better climates
- Spring attire at nippy winter temperatures



- Debt
- Tax season
- Dystopias
- The practicality of apathy
- Celebrities in UFO death cults
- More people reading sports than news
- Building up a tolerance to the medication that makes you ok with the fact that your life sucks
- The more they do to you...
...the less you believe they are doing it