

LINKS, 07/29/11

bmaz is working on trash. Here's a highlight of what I'll be talking about.

Justice and Injustice

Two developments in the Thomas Drake case. First, Josh Gerstein has posted the excerpt from the transcript where Judge Richard Bennett laid into William Welch about the three year delay after raiding Drake's house. Also, Steven Aftergood reports that Drake's lawyers are trying to get one of the charged documents declassified so former IS00 head William Leonard (who would have been the Defense's expert witness had the case gone to trial), can complain about its improper classification in the first place. Ultimately, we're going to learn the government pursued Drake for years over a document that was improperly overclassified.

The company that holds a patent on the breast cancer genes BRCA1 and BRCA2 won an Appeals Court ruling, allowing it to sustain its patent. One our own smart rulers explained what this means to me some years back—I'm not at high risk for BRCA, but may be at risk for another genetic issue. But no scientist will study the other possible genetic condition unless I have first disqualified being a BRCA holder—at a cost of thousands.

Pam Bondi, FL's AG who fired the two women doing some of the best investigation in foreclosure fraud, was getting donations from Lender Processing Services and Provest while investigating them.

Update: Here's Judge Leonie Brinkema's order requiring James Risen to testify at the Jeffrey Sterling trial, but with strict limits. I'm betting William Welch either appeals—or starts getting cold fee.

Your Daily Murdoch

Three days after Louise Mensch questioned the Murdochs and Rebekah Brooks, she received what is basically a threat to expose her past drug use. She took it in stride, admitting, "Although I do not remember the specific incident, this sounds highly probable."

The MPs leading inquiries into the Murdoch scandal have called on Gordon Taylor to testify to the judge leading the other inquiry. The settlement—and gag—Taylor made with NotW is at the center of charges that James Murdoch lied to Parliament.

Our Dying Empire

Former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair and Deputy National Security Advisor Douglas Lute have gotten into a pissing match over whether we should use drones or not in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It's worth emphasizing, though, that Lute cedes Blair's argument that we should be cooperating more closely with Pakistan, even while saying we've got to make an exception now because we have a chance to take out al Qaeda.

"Most" of Saudi Arabia's troops are being withdrawn from Bahrain.

Our Dying Economy

As part of the devastating GDP numbers today, they revised GDP downward for the last two years to admit that we're still not back to where we were before the crash. Now that the Village has data showing what the rest of us already knew—that the Great Recession never ended, at least not for the little people—maybe some of them will remember that jobs are more important than austerity.

The Emergency Financial Manager for Detroit's Public School system, Roy Roberts is the first to modify an existing contract using his powers: he just cut both union and non-union salaries by 10%. This is on top of a big wage concession last year, not to mention huge student-teacher ratios.

Brian Schweitzer—who would win a race easily—said at a presser yesterday he's not going to run, because the system is broken. I suspect he's just one of many good candidates who will pass on DC until it becomes functional.

Terrorists and CyberHacks

Charles Johnson has caught Pam Geller in an interesting attempt to bury the past. Just a few days ago, she removed the following line from an email "from an Atlas reader in Norway" "We are stockpiling weapons, ammunition and equipment. This is going to happen fast." She admitted in comments to posting this anonymously to prevent his arrest. In his Manifesto, right wing Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik complained about Johnson's past criticism of Geller.

HBGary has prevented its former CEO, Aaron Barr, from appearing on a panel on Anonymous at Defcon. They cited his separation agreement in their threat to file an injunction against his appearance.