



Just Biden His Time: Reporter Closeted by Veeps Staff

Powers was the designated “pool reporter” assigned to the event, a private party at the Winter Park, Fla., home of developer and philanthropist Alan Ginsburg, the purpose of which was to raise money for Sen. Bill Nelson’s (D-Fla.) 2012 reelection campaign. Upon arriving at Ginsburg’s house, where the approximately 150 guests, each of whom was contributing at least \$500 to Nelson’s campaign, were already in attendance, Powers was shuffled off to a storage closet by a Biden staffer to keep him from mingling with the guests.



Consigned to the closet — ironically, right next to a bag marked “consignment” — Powers told Drudge that the “low-level staffer” who’d put him in there stood guard outside the door. “When I’d stick my head out,” Powers related, “they’d say, ‘Not yet. We’ll let you know when you can come out.’”

The guests, Powers [wrote](#) in his report on the event, “snacked on caprese crostini with oven-dried mozzarella and basil, rosemary flatbread with grapes[,] honey and gorgonzola cheese and bacon deviled eggs, before being served a lunch of grilled chicken Caesar and garden vegetable wraps, croissants with roasted turkey breast and ham and Swiss cheese on ciabatta rolls.” Powers got a bottle of water.

Fortunately, Powers had his BlackBerry to help pass the time. He took a picture of his holding cell and emailed it to his editors, who [posted](#) it on a *Sentinel* blog, along with Powers’ remark: “Sounds like a nice party.”

Drudge notes that “Powers was closeted at about 11:30 a.m., held for about an hour and 15 minutes, came out for 35 minutes of remarks by Biden and Sen. Bill Nelson, Florida Democrat, and then returned to his jail for the remainder of the event.” In his report Powers mentioned that “Biden took no questions” and that he, the only reporter even permitted at the fundraiser, “was allowed to listen to the remarks but not given an opportunity to talk with anyone at the event.”

Biden’s remarks, by the way, were the standard boilerplate about how no progress would be made without government: “No business is going to build its own ports, its own runways, its own broadband networks. None are able to that. The government provides seed money. That’s how we built the transcontinental railroad. That’s how we got the Internet.” (The government-funded transcontinental railroad was a disaster, loaded down with the traditional trio of waste, fraud, and abuse — so much corruption, in fact, that it ended up causing a [major scandal](#). Meanwhile, James J. Hill built the transcontinental Great Northern Railroad on his own dime and turned it into an enormous success.) Biden used these examples of alleged government success to plead for taxpayers to be forced to “invest in research in development in the private sector by encouraging it in the public sector.”

Another howler from the Veep: “Today, because of Barack Obama, we’ve regained respect in the world.” For example, Muslims in Sri Lanka show their “respect” for the United States under Obama by [beating and trampling an effigy of the President](#).



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on March 28, 2011

Powers, for his part, seems more amused by the furor this incident has aroused in the blogosphere than outraged at the way he was treated. In [comments](#) on the blogged photo of the closet he pointed out that “it’s unfortunately not unusual for event organizers to put reporters in a spot where they cannot wander freely and talk with people at the event,” usually in a roped-off corner, and that the last time it happened to him was at an event attended by Florida Gov. Rick Scott, a Republican. At the same time, he said, “this was an extreme, and extremely inappropriate way of handling the press” that prevented him from doing his job “fully and properly.” Indeed, it bespeaks contempt for the press and (for that matter) for anyone not in the power elite — a point driven home by the fact that while Ginsburg called Powers and “very graciously apologized,” saying “he had no idea” that Powers had been closeted, a member of Biden’s staff emailed a “far less satisfying” apology.

Right now Biden probably wishes the government *hadn’t* created the Internet.

Photo: Joe Biden



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