*The games of the young are as old as the sins of their fathers.*

 - William Durant

It’s Friday morning and my inbox is even more cluttered than usual. This tells me that Anonymous has been busy. That in turn tells me that I’ll be busy.

There was a time when I knew beforehand when Anonymous was to be busy, and what they’d be busy doing, as I would have been somehow involved in whatever was to be done; either I would have been involved in the planning or I would have been been asked for advice on some aspect of the execution.

Along with a few other individuals who have since gone their separate ways, I did indeed run some parts of Anonymous, and rather thoroughly at that; but that was years ago when what we had was something different than the larger, vastly more complex thing that has grown out of it. And even back then, our control was only as good as our ability to predict what might be permitted of us by the very people we were trying to influence. No one is in control now, except by degrees and to extents, and even then the control is a juggling act, performed in the dark. Just trying to keep up after the fact is a juggling act in and of itself, as will be made abundantly clear to you.

Adding to the trouble is the problem of defining what exactly Anonymous is and who is involved. I am not Anonymous, for instance. I used to be, but then I was outed and taken to court by a certain enemy institution. This made me less anonymous, and thus less Anonymous. That it also happened to make me more Anonymous, I suppose, will not clarify anything, but then I’m a special case. Suffice to say that I am neither anonymous nor Anonymous, but that I remain heavily involved in Anonymous. Better yet, we’ll come back to that.

For now, my inbox is cluttered. It is cluttered because several dozen media outlets have just been made aware of some new Anonymous action. Many of the subject lines include the terms “FBI,” “call,” and “hack” in some combination or another. This could be good news or bad news. I open one of the press inquiries.

*Gregg-*

*Can you tell me anything about the FBI conference call that Anonymous somehow got its hands on and put up on YouTube this morning?*

It’s good news. That means it can wait. I go downstairs to the kitchen and grab a nice cold plastic bottle of Pepsi from the fridge. I love drinking Pepsi.

Back upstairs, I sit down again at my desk. On the wall in front of me are three large flatscreen TVs which I use as monitors. This is not an unnecessary extravagance. One monitor displays my e-mail and a few other browser windows. Another is for a live feed of some cable news channel, usually CNN. The third is given over to the various IRC channels in which the business of Anonymous is largely conducted.

IRC stands for internet relay chat. It’s a relatively old means of text communication that remains popular with Anons for a variety of reasons, both historical and practical. A particular IRC server will include anywhere from one to hundreds of channels, each one acting as an individual chat room. A few servers among the countless others in existence are dedicated entirely to Anonymous. Most of these will have several hundred people logged on at any given time, with those users divided into dozens of different channels and each channel dedicated to a particular operation. But a user may be in more than one channel at once, and more than one server. And any user may privately chat with any other user on the same server, or several of them at once. It is a system that practically guarantees intrigue.

On this morning, I am logged on to a certain Anonymous-associated server which is unusual insomuch as that it has only one channel, and that channel rarely includes more than fifty people at a time. It is also unusual because of who some of these people are, and what they are collectively capable of doing.

One of these people, for instance, is a hacker who made his name when he led an attack on the servers of a certain government contractor that had sought to bring down Anonymous; he would later go on to conduct countless operations against further targets, many affiliated with the U.S. military, intelligence, and law enforcement world. All of this has left him with a sizable personal following - and therefore a high degree of influence over how Anonymous would evolve, as it does quite rapidly.

Another individual is best described as an Anonymous organizer; his Twitter feed is followed by more than 150,000 people. Yet another person “present,” so to speak, has over 500,000 Twitter followers. In both cases, a great number of these followers are other Anons, and many others are journalists - which is to say that if one hopes to get an operation off the ground, or bring attention to some particular item of information, both of these people can accomplish that in a few seconds.

One fellow is a member of a particular “cell” of Anonymous that specializes in obtaining personal information about police officers and government agents. Another has endless contacts in D.C. and a network of informants that keep him abreast of what’s going on in Congress; yet another has written speeches and op-eds for congressional candidates in addition to God knows what other horrible things. Three people here help to administrate a much larger IRC server network called Anonops. Others present serve as researchers, analysts, propagandists, programmers, or some combination thereof - although there are no titles or formal roles or official hierarchy.

This is just one of many nodes that together constitute the distributed network of activists known as Anonymous.

And this one grouping of about fifty people - like every other de facto grouping of Anonymous activists, large or small - operates with absolute military discipline and unity of purpose. Their combined capabilities, resources, and connections are deployed in perpetual lockstep. Imagine an individual who has lived fifty lives in fifty different places, who draws expertise from fifty different industries, who has access to the friends and acquaintances and colleagues of fifty different people, who can engage in fifty different pursuits at one time in such a way as to bring all of these resources to bear against a single target, and in perfect concert. Imagine this, and you begin to understand the power inherent to Anonymous.

Just kidding. A bunch of them are fighting.

Fight Participant (FP) #1 is a prominent information activist who, at the time I come in, is explaining to FP #2 that if he himself really intended to inform on FP #2 to the police, he could have done so by now. FP #2, who has presumably just finished asserting something to the effect that FP #1 is a potential police informant, then criticizes FP #3 for having associated with “cop-lovers” such as FP #1, and also for having given some quote to *Wired* which apparently caused some sort of perception problem for the Wikileaks organization. FP #3 retorts that FP #2 has engaged in counterproductive operations and also has a habit of repeating himself. FP #1 adds to that charge with an example of an attack carried out by FP #2 that allegedly caused incidental harm to innocent civilians. But FP #2 is still focused on FP #3, whom he characterizes as having been rightfully kicked out of the elite operational group of which both were once major participants, and that this expulsion had been prompted by the fact that his opponent was “untrustworthy and soft on cops.” He even accuses FP #3 of having been “probably busted” afterwards, thereby explaining the period afterwards in which the fellow disappeared from the scene. FP #1 breaks in with the charge that that particular operational group, as well as the sub-movement that its participants successfully founded afterwards, possessed no regard for the well-being of the population. FP #4, a skilled hacker who is allied with FP #2, breaks in to note that FP #1 is a “straight up pussy” who has performed a metaphorical act of fellatio on a certain European newspaper, and merely out of pique at that.

Aside from these particular combatants, others among these 50 dislike each other based on every imaginable sort of grievance, and even a few grievances of the sort that have barely been invented. A couple of regulars here believe that one particular channel resident is loyal to a certain tight-knit group of ex-military men and intelligence contractors who spend their free time trying to identify and out Anonymous participants. One is down on another out of contempt for the other having worked closely with still another group, a group that acted under the auspices of Anonymous but whose membership was proverbial for its incompetence. At least one person suspects that two others are secretly working to discredit Anonymous, but this one keeps his suspicions quiet enough that those two don't suspect that he suspects them of being suspect. It's all a rich tapestry, you see. And I don't mean to imply that I'm somehow above any of this. Just a week ago, I was in a big fight with FP #2 and FP #4 over another matter entirely.

The thing about a fight is that it dies out after being fought. And the nature of IRC, which encourages confrontation by virtue of making physical altercation impossible, encourages fighting. The conflict having burnt out, I can get the attention of the channel as a whole.

"Hey, who stole the FBI conference call, and what's up with that, anyway?"

A question like this, posed in an Anonymous channel, will receive two kinds of answers. One kind of answer is made in-channel and will consist of speculation, jokes, or speculative jokes. The other sort is made via a private message to the questioner and will be accurate.

I get both sorts of answers; privately, I’m told that the FBI recording is of a conference call between bureau agents and their counterparts at Scotland Yard and concerns their joint investigation into Anonymous, with some talk about previous and upcoming arrests. In-channel, I’m told that the FBI recording is of a conference call between bureau agents and their counterparts at Scotland Yard and involves a gay phone sex orgy in which orgasms are successfully achieved by all participants.

I'm also told, via another private message, that the issue of the FBI recording should be downplayed today, as something else of far greater importance is about to surface. Fine by me, as I'm still not sure what the deal is with the FBI recording, which I’ve just learned of two minutes ago, and I don’t want to have to just wing it when I go on *The Situation Room* like David Gergen does. I’ll actually have to listen to it.

I start to regret this after pressing the play button, as the first few minutes consists of in-jokes that presumably stem from earlier communications - there is something about cheese which they all deem to be very funny - and even this is followed by several minutes of inane smalltalk before the leading agents on each side finally get down to the business of trans-Atlantic cooperation on the “Anonymous problem.”

“... reached back out to our Washington field office...”

“... that’s an interesting one, there...”

“... got Ryan Cleary and Jake Davis in court on the 27th...”

“... try to build some time in to allow for some operational matters on your end...”

“... set back the further arrests of Kayla and Tflow...”

“... without the defense knowing...”

“... partly by our guys and partly by the USAF team...”

“... we’ve cocked things up in the past, we know that...”

“... where they hacked the Manchester Credit Union...”

“... he was of interest to one of the guys in New York...”

Much of what’s here will be of interest to various defense lawyers on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as to certain Anonymous participants of the sort who spend their time investigating the investigators. That a certain trial is being pushed back for a particular reason “without the defense knowing” is particularly helpful. Certain individuals on our side will need to be told about the involvement of a “USAF team,” a discovery which would seem to confirm certain suspicions about another issue entirely.

The conversation in the IRC channel is turning to Greece, where Athens burns and where Anonymous participants from around the world have been hitting two dozen government websites via distributed denial of service attacks, successfully holding them down in protest of the austerity measures. Similar attacks were made against Polish government websites a week before, when the copyright measure ACTA was being considered for implementation; the next day, some large number of Polish parliamentarians had donned the Guy Fawkes masks popularized by Anonymous. That whole ACTA/SOPA thing had been wild indeed.

Someone comes in to the channel and drops a link to the Boston Police Department website. I click on it, and see that the website has been taken over, its front page now adorned with a long message from the Anonymous sub-campaign called Antisec along with a YouTube embed of the track “Sound of Da Police” by KRS 1. So I listen to “Sound of Da Police” for a bit and sip my Pepsi. I have to turn it down when someone from the *Boston Herald* calls to ask why the Boston Police Department website is now playing ‘90s hip hop. I explain as best I can. Incidentally, it was out of retaliation for the earlier Boston Police raid on Occupy Boston, which brought one of the last Occupy Wall Street branch demonstrations to a close; the message left by Anonymous on the BPD website recaps the whole thing.

The funny thing is, Anonymous had already retaliated a month or two previously by finding and releasing the names, phone numbers, and addresses of Boston policemen, and the Suffolk County District Attorney had retaliated to *that* by asking Twitter to provide his department with the identities behind several Twitter accounts that had disseminated the offending info. The DA also requested that Twitter refrain from informing the individuals involved, but Twitter did anyway, sending them helpful e-mails to the effect that they had seven days to inform the company of their intention to file a motion to squash, in which case Twitter would decline the DA’s request altogether. The Anons in question got in touch with an associate of mine who sent them along to a California lawyer named Jay Leiderman, who in turn arranged for the Massachusetts ACLU to get that motion squashed, baby. Thus it was that the DA got nothing.

I take a few more calls from reporters and then turn my attention back to the channel. They’re talking about an Anonymous campaign against the Syrian government, which is heating up in coordination with the local unrest. But then I get another private message notifying me that I should take a look at a certain message board used by Massachusetts police officers. Turns out some cops are unhappy about the Boston PD hack; the site administrator writes, “I wish these guys would get caught, and someone would show them some old-fashioned justice.” A state cop adds, “I love [sic] to be on the entry team that removes these assclowns from their mommy's basement.” Another fellow daydreams aloud about “extraordinary rendition.”

Well, cops can be temperamental. Someone suggests that we use these and other quotes for a PR offensive, but I decline; there’s enough going on already, and we need to stay on point for whatever else is coming out today.

“Why not? These are quality quotes,” the individual writes to me.

“I know,” I reply. “Maybe I’ll use them later, for something else.”

The CNN producer buzzes me on Skype; *The Situation Room* is about ready for me. Speaking into my webcam, I answer the questions as best I can while also making sure not to say anything that would sound bad in print. It’s amazing how much worse things can sound in print than they do when said first on television.

On IRC, another argument breaks out about tactics. Then, a certain hacker announces that the law firm Puckett & Faraj - which earlier in the month had secured a plea bargain centering around a mere pay cut for the Marine who’d eventually admitted to leading his unit into a massacre of 24 men, women, and children in Haditha - had been “taken down.”

I pulled up the website. This one, too, had been taken over and replaced, in this case with a screed against the circumstances surrounding the massacre and the punishment. “Meanwhile, Bradley Manning, who was brave enough to risk his life and freedom to expose the truth about government corruption, is threatened with life imprisonment,” the message read. “When justice cannot be found within the confines of their crooked court systems, we must seek revenge on the streets and on the internet.”

It was Sabu and an associate of his, both of whom were in the channel as well, along with other channels on other servers. Even if they hadn’t been there to confirm, it would have been clear from the rest of the message, especially the part pointing out that several years worth of e-mails to and from the firm had been seized in the hack and would be available for download shortly.

I remember the first time Sabu did this, almost exactly a year beforehand. A few minutes after it had happened, I tipped off a reporter who’d interviewed me a couple of times previously, a fellow with one of the major newspapers. That 70,000 e-mails had been taken from a company - in this case, an intelligence contracting firm that did business with the FBI and various military and intelligence branches of the federal government - did not strike him as newsworthy just then. The next day, it blew up into a massive story spawning hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, dozens of television and radio segments, and at least two documentaries. This time, no reporter would make that same mistake. I’m on the phone for much of the next hour.

Between calls, I pick up more snippets from the IRC channel and private messages. The e-mails amount to 3 gigabytes, I’m told, which means there are quite a few of them even if some of the space is taken up by larger PDF files, pictures, whatever else. Someone points out that Sabu and his partner had already gone through a couple e-mails and found some damaging samples. It’s noted that the firm specializes in defending military men and both partners are ex-Marines themselves.

The link to the e-mails appears in the channel - and shortly afterwards, on several other channels at the Anonops server, where hundreds of Anons will see them. The downloading begins, while a couple people at our channel begin forwarding the link to certain journalists known to be particularly competent.

Reports start coming in from in-channel Anons within a few minutes. One has just located an e-mail thread featuring some fellow named Don Greenlaw writing to one of the firm’s principals about a recent incident in which some Marines had been caught urinating on dead Afghan combatants.

*Since we all know that 'pigs/pork' are something they detest and a major insult and offensive to them. Do whatever you think is necessary. Put pig's grease on your bullets, dump pig's grease on the dead, chop 'em up and feed them to the local dogs. But don't put it on the internet.*

Some digging is done on Greenlaw, who turns out to be a retired Marine captain. I continue reading the thread. Another fellow named James Spoo apparently chimed in a while later, taking issue with Greenlaw’s comments:

*I have to disagree.*

Well, this one’s got some restraint.

*I don't have a problem with someone pissing on the enemy.*

Nevermind.

*I just don't think it's smart (in this day and age) to take a photo of your actions and put it on the internet. If you HAVE to piss on them. Do what you have to do, spread the word around town (tell everybody what you did), become a 'folk hero', but don't share it with the WORLD in a photo or on the internet.*

Mr. Spoo belabors the point for another paragraph or two and then brings it on home:

*It's like the Abu Ghraib Prison incident. Pose for photos with the prisoners, have some fun, and do what you need to do, BUT don't put it on the internet. No/no one would have ever heard of that 'session' if they kept it off of the internet.*

Someone volunteers to go ahead and start putting all of the deranged and indicative comments in a single online file for easy distribution. Someone else reports that James Spoo is in fact a USAF captain - a fellow whose name has come up before, that time in leaked cables concerning the State Department, to which he’s somehow attached, and TEMPEST, a program of countermeasures against the leaking of data. This is noted to be both amusing and relevant to the interests of several Anonymous participants presen. Someone else posts another discovery from another thread:

*If we had a CinC in the WH with a pair of balls instead of a dipshit, Muslim/Marxist from Kenya we would have turned our troops loose early on to shot, bayonet, behead, bomb, blast with artillery, as many of the SOBs as they could...*

… and it goes on like that. Everyone in the channel giggles over the hilarious “Muslim/Marxist from Kenya” thing until another argument breaks out, this time over the ethics of hacking a legal defense firm. It’s been pointed out by now that the leak, unaccompanied by any redaction, could have untold repercussions on who knows how many cases; at least one news outlet is already loudly announcing that the name of a sexual assault victim may be found in the e-mails if one looks for it. Someone else points out in turn that the outlet in question is exactly the sort that would start looking for the names of sexual assault victims rather than the truth about a massacre that lead to the shooting of children who were hiding in cabinets.

The debate's cut short, as many are, by an announcement in the channel: police were about to move on Occupy Austin in an effort to get it shot down. I relay the message to an associate, who has connections in Austin; he calls a friend at a local news affiliate, who tells him he's already sent out a crew to capture the proceedings. I answer a few more e-mails from reporters and get myself another Pepsi. The girlfriend arrives back home and I fill her in on the day's rampages and notify her that I may be in for a busy weekend. I only check in on the IRC a couple
dozen more times that evening.

By the time I wake up on Saturday, another surprise is out. Sabu & Co. never left Puckett & Faraj's servers, even after their presence had been discovered, and no one had thought to check to see if they might still be inside. As such, all of the e-mails sent by everyone on the network right after the hack had been intercepted as well. This hadn't been done before; not only would it be interesting, but the contents would potentially be actionable.

The narrative starts the previous morning, when Neal Puckett has presumably learned via an inquiring reporter that his law firm has just been dealt some unknown blow by a mysterious band of computer monsters. He writes a note to the guy who does his security, a fellow named Micah who's associated with the security firm Chief Ingredient:

*Micah,*

*News agencies are reporting that our website was hacked and that the hackers claim our emails and sensitive personal information was taken. Is that possible?*

Micah writes back:

*Hi Neal,*

*This was done by someone who clearly knows what they are doing. Anonymous is one of the largest, if not THE largest group of hackers in the world at this time. They've taken down Sony, DoD and many others in recent months... If this truly is anon, it may not be limited to just your site or just this one attack... Anonymous is a little out of my league. Since you are being targeted, I would suggest hiring a specialist for this type of matter. I'd be more than happy to help you select one, but it seems that someone dedicated to ensuring the security on an ongoing basis and can have 100% control over the server and site may be the direction needed at this point.*

Micah goes on to suggest that Neal call the FBI. Likely he wasn't yet aware of the taped FBI conference call incident or he would have probably suggested some other agency.

Neal forwards Micah's explanation to his partner, Haytham Faraj, who asks, "Why the fuck does Chief Ingredient not know about this before we have to tell them." Or, I guess, he states this.

Micah writes back again to note that there may be some bad news; it looks like the hackers might have gotten access to the firm's e-mail. By that time, the latest round of news reports had already confirmed this.

Neal breaks the news to his family members:

*Because we did so well on the case, a group of reckless international hackers stole all of our law firm emails to publish on the internet today. Not sure how this will affect the business of the firm going forward, but for now, we're not able to do any business.*

Marcy, another firm employee, alerts her mother:

*This may completely destroy the Law Firm.*

And then, there's this, from Neal to some fellow named "Al."

*Al,*

*All of the firm's emails were stolen today by "Anonymous" the international hackers.  All because we won the Wuterich case. Beware. May want to change your passwords to your email accounts.  Any emails between you and me may have been captured and could be released onto a website.*

This round of e-mails is throw up via pastebin.com, a popular web utility among Anons. The press digs right into it, with most articles centering on the "This may completely destroy the Law Firm" line. The same file is posted to reddit, a website on which various submissions from around the web are voted up or down by some limitless number of users. The demographic has historically been overrepresented by scholarly types, scientists, bookworms, and the internet's vast population of unemployable know-it-alls, which makes it the most powerful crowd-sourcing engine in existence; it remains so even despite a decline in the average erudition of the usership, a downward spiral that almost inevitably ensues as a site grows increasingly popular, and thus increasingly accessible. Also, posting something on reddit is a great way to get professional bloggers like Andrew Sullivan to post it a week later.

The day's business proceeds. The discussions on the IRC channel are split between further analysis of the Puckett & Faraj e-mails and Syria; a couple of Anonymous operatives who are native to the country have provided some new videos of government forces committing atrocities. These are sent off to the relevant news agencies and otherwise disseminated through Twitter and Facebook. But then someone present in the channel who also helps run another one on another server, the one from which the bulk of Anonymous' Syria work is organized, announces that Assad's office has been hacked.

I log in to the channel in question. The hacker responsible is doing a bit of bragging, which I don't begrudge him; he claims he deleted every file on 12 computers in addition to taking the available e-mails. Those are already starting to circulate in the form of samples, on pastebin as usual, and are taken from the e-mail account of Assad regime's PR woman, Bouthaina Shaaban. Ms. Shaaban turns out to lack a certain saving subtlety. In one of the e-mails posted, someone at the U.S. television network ABC contacts her with the following question:

*As I’m sure you’ve seen, there are some comments attributed to you in the* Kuwait Times *today that I wanted to ask you about. Is this true? Could you expand a little on what it is you have?*

Shaaban the Diplomat responds in pitch-perfect dictatorese:

*According to Kuwait Times, I regret the unprofessionality and irresopnsibility of some mass media in Gulf region. It is obvious that such news has no relevence to reality and can not be said either by me or by any other Syrian officials. Needless to say that no other mass media has paid attention to such false statements that might pup up every now and then.*

The quote, as it turns out, was Shaaban addressing a delegation to Assad’s office, whom she allegedly told that the regime possessed “sex tapes” of several “Gulf leaders” that had been putting pressure on the regime in the wake of its response to the unrest, adding that those tapes would be released on “internet websites” if things, like, came to that.

Hard to know what to think of that. I skip the other e-mails, which are already being analyzed by people with a better idea of what to look for than I; aside from the Syrian Anons, the channel is filled with others from around the world who have specialized in Middle Eastern affairs since at least the previous January, when Anonymous intervened in the Tunisian revolt which would thereafter spread across the region. As for how many of them have been involved in such things beforehand, it's hard to say; to the extent that they become known, Anonymous participants of the especially active sort tend to have colorful, wonkish backgrounds. But there's another sort - people like me - who had nothing but disdain for activism until Anonymous turned the practice on its head.

Another announcement, made via Twitter, announces the death of a certain Anonymous operative who has just been shot to death by government forces while taping near Tahrir Square. He was the third Anon of whom I'm aware that has died in Egypt thus far. Two of them were Egyptians; another had travelled to the country shortly after the revolt and was killed under similar circumstances, in an attempt to record and document the evil that is inflicted upon other men.

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Saturday afternoon. A small group of Anons who refer to themselves as Cabin Crew have released dozens of e-mail address and passwords for some ridiculously large number of police officers and sheriff’s departments in West Virginia. Sometimes this sort of thing simply forces a whole lot of lawmen to change their passwords; on other occasions - and depending largely on the sort of network in which the e-mail accounts sit - someone or another will manage to get into the actual e-mail accounts, thereby whipping up a nice batch of scandal fodder as the results go to the local press. Something of the sort had happened to Texas cops a month previously, bringing revelations of the sort you can probably imagine.

By the time all of this is sent along to the requisite news outlets, someone on reddit notices that the “Al” to whom lawyer Neal Puckett sent a warning about their shared e-mail correspondence is actually Congressman Allen West.

We search the law firm’s e-mails for “Allen West,” as well as two private e-mail addresses that are quickly tied to him, and we discover that the Florida representative and Iraq vet assisted Puckett & Faraj in a secret effort to get the military trial shot down altogether:

*General Dunford,*

*greetings Sir and wanted to introduce you to LtCol Neal Puckett (USMC, Ret). Neal was my defense counsel for my case in Iraq back in 2003. He has worked many high profile military cases including the current one with Marine SSgt Wuterich. In the strictest of confidence Neal has asked me to connect the two of you. He wishes to have a meeting with you on this case, he resides in Alexandria. I will step aside so as to not have any potential of influence from my "position".*

General Dunford is the second in command of the United States Marine Corp, who agrees to secretly meet with the defense attorney of a Marine being prosecuted for ordering a slaughter of civilians at such time as the case as ongoing, and doing so at the behest of a newly-elected congressman who also acts in secret. Not long thereafter, an associate of the firm named Mark Zaid brings the following good news:

*Guys, I spoke privately yesterday with Congressman Duncan Hunter about Wuterich's situation. He is willing to help see about making this whole case go away. He wants me to talk with one of his staffers and I am waiting to hear back from the guy (another Marine).  I also met with ColG.I. Wilson USMC (ret) who I know through a client. You may know him. He knows Brahams and about the case. He is also willing to do what he can, including talking with the current Marine Commandant who he knows, about dropping the case*

Hunter is a former congressman and 2008 GOP presidential primary candidate.

By the next day, all of this is sent to the press. People are giddy; between this and a few other nuggets in the same vein, the material is beautiful, relevant stuff, certainly more than enough to get the public thinking again about the role of power in the rule of law, and at the very least worthy of prompting some legwork on the part of the press now that the analysis and key points were already out and about and free for the taking.

But nothing really appears in the press about any of it. The Marine captains cheering Abu Ghraib and calling for the desecration of the Islamic enemy with pork; the secret collusion of two congressmen and a high-ranking Marine official with a law firm on one side of a serious criminal proceeding, the other e-mails that were found in which are described various instances of witness intimidation by officers against privates in the context of still other cases; long and mysterious screeds from Puckett and his partner to a Marine official in which it is claimed that the trial must not go forward lest certain things get out - none of it made the press. The reporters had been happy to report on and even repeat the stolen e-mails, which themselves that provided an entertaining glimpse of a law firm being devastated by futuristic cyber whatevers. The story that Anonymous had disrupted yet another powerful institution was again in the consciousness; the information that was the objective of the operation was largely ignored. The press had gotten their story.

This happens sometimes. And it’s a fine thing, because it reminds some of us why it is that we decided to live like this in the first place.