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January 06, 2011

### Cato's Chris Preble: I No Longer Support Capt. Honors

Chris Preble, Cato's director of foreign policy and former commissioned U.S. Navy officer, in a piece at [CNN](#) made every case as to why Capt. Owen Honors should be given a break over the recently revealed "morale boosting" video, finally asking: "Can't we just cut the guy some slack?"

Preble's answer?

Actually, no.

[...]

...a single officer's actions will be seized upon by the service's harshest critics as a sign of an institution run amok. The antics of a group of Navy and Marine Corps aviators at the infamous Tailhook convention in 1991 affected naval officers all through the service. I know. I was deployed half a world away at the time, and yet my promotion to lieutenant junior grade was held up until I could prove that I was not involved in the events in Las Vegas.

If Honors' punishment seems severe -- he was relieved of command of the Enterprise and his career is effectively over -- consider that officers can be processed out of the military for "conduct unbecoming" even when they commit offenses off base and in civilian clothes. Officers have been removed from the service, often with deep reductions in rank that result in severe cuts in their retirement income, for offenses ranging from driving under the influence of alcohol to solicitation of prostitution.

By contrast, Honors was acting in an official capacity, using government equipment and the time of his staff. And always in the role of executive officer.



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