

# A Pimped Out Movement

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by *Conor Friedersdorf*

Says [Radley Balko](#):

There's so much real investigative journalism conservatives could be doing on government waste, incompetence, accountability, and transparency. [It's pathetic](#) that donors on the right keep handing over money for these moronic "stings". The right needs 10 more Tim Carneys. Instead, they keep churning out James O'Keefes.

He's right.

There's a dysfunctional cycle on the right where the grassroots gets rightly fed up with various government abuses, the nation's shaky fiscal footing, and other matters of substance... but then rather than supporting and embracing champions who are forcefully fighting those things, they get distracted by Andrew Breitbart style circus acts. As a result, the USA is at less risk than ever before of pimps being assisted by left-leaning nonprofits.

What an achievement!

Meanwhile, IJ stands up for small entrepreneurs all over America, the ACLU monitors and challenges excesses in the national security state, Tim Carney keeps his eye on the pernicious relationship between lobbyists, big business, and big government, the Cato Institute's Julian Sanchez pushes back against intrusions into the privacy of citizens, various investigative journalists act as government watchdogs, the Manhattan Institute sounds the alarm about unsustainable pension costs, FIRE stands up for free speech on campus, *Washington Monthly* chronicles how dysfunctional regulations in the medical device market are disadvantaging innovative

entrepreneurs and costing lives, *Reason* chronicles abuses in the War on Drugs that threaten all our freedoms...

But much of the grassroots right has fooled itself into thinking that it's the Breitbarts and O'Keefes of the world who are advancing their interests, behaving as if it's rogue pimps they regard as the biggest threat to the country's future. The Fox News coverage of that story, compared to all the issues listed above, almost makes it seem that way. It isn't the first time that headline grabbing media wizards have ridden style and antics to notoriety. It's still a shame, and something to be resisted, even though one gets the sense that a lot of conservatives don't even see the problem. As a result, they've got an ideological movement that is excellent at getting the base very riled up... and an utter failure at harnessing that energy to accomplish anything significant.

Or [insignificant](#).

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