

Free the Ashford One!: Damian Green and the Police state

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I suppose the Conservatives should hardly complain about heavy-handed police tactics over the [arrest](#) of [Damian Green](#) on suspicion of “conspiring to commit misconduct in a public office” and “aiding and abetting, counselling or procuring misconduct in a public office”. (He was released on bail until a date in February.) They could hardly contain their glee when plod dragged off Labour apparatchiks at dawn and interviewed Tony Blair in Downing Street over the so-called [cash for honours affair](#).

But this is truly bizarre and a waste of police time. If it ever emerges that the Home Secretary knew and even sanctioned this operation then it will turn very serious.

If it's over-zealous policing then that is bad enough. Trying to prosecute an MP for 'receiving' leaks is an affront to the rough and tumble of British politics that keeps it honest.

We don't have decent freedom of expression legislation or the right to whistleblow enshrined in a constitution because we don't have a constitution. In this case the leak was eminently in the public interest.

I do have less of a problem with disciplining civil servants. If you decide to break your contract on a matter of principle then well done, but you may have to accept the consequences. But arrest and charge them? No. And MPs? certainly not.

As [Guido](#) reports, with his tongue in cheek, if this was enforced properly it could lead to the arrest of half the shadow cabinet.

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