

## Interview with Taylor Pensoneau

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: How about the other wave of technology that's hot? We're talking, obviously, about the internet. How has that changed journalism?

Pensoneau: Well, that's a good question and I should have mentioned it earlier. There are studies that are showing – and this is just completely beyond the pale as far as I'm concerned – that actually people are getting what they consider their fill of news off these internet blogs. And as we talk right now, you can write about anything on those blogs.

I'll give an example. Again, here we go with Obama. Back when Obama announced for President the Associated Press called me to comment, and I did. I said, this is kind of an idyllic situation and I thought it was kind of neat he was doing it from the steps there by the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois., and I said how idyllic. I said in one of my sentences about it – and I meant it in a positive way – “It's really like a neat political fairy tale.” Okay. Bad choice of words. This got printed all over the country. It was an AP story and everyone picked it up. Okay. I got raked over the coals by blogs for being racist because of those words fairy tale. I meant it in a very positive way. It was taken up by umpteen bloggers from San Diego to the East Coast, writing about it, and I was identified as a political historian in Illinois who happens to be racist. I mean, you know, it's interesting. I was amazed. I'd go on the internet and resurrect this stuff. It's there.

Then I got sucked into the Obama-Hillary Clinton primary campaign thing. She was being pressed to release her personal papers from when she was First Lady, where she would get involved in issues and things like that. She retaliated by saying, Why aren't you asking then-Senator Obama about his personal papers when he was in the Illinois legislature? Okay. So, again, I get calls from newspapers, including the AP, and they wanted to know if any of the Illinois State senators ever kept records of who came in to see them and their appointments and things like that. And the reason I was asked was because Obama said, or Axelrod said or somebody, “We have nothing. We'll tell you right now, we've kept nothing, there's nothing from his Illinois legislative days in terms of any records or memorandums or mementos or reports.

I said, “Well some do.” Yeah, some do, some don't, but a number of them do. They'll keep logs of who comes in to see them. They'll keep little mementos on how they voted and things like this, and what issues they were dealing with. Well, that ran nationwide and I got raked over the coals again by Obama partisans for trying to undercut Obama. Then it was interesting,

because they always pointed out, how dare I say this because I was a lobbyist for the coal industry, as if that was a sin. You can see this stuff. It's on the internet. No big deal. I have fun. I go in and read all of this stuff. It's just interesting; you know, that I meant it factually. Some of the state senators did keep records, I know, and some didn't. It's as simple as that, but they wanted to know if it was unusual, that Obama as a State Senator, that his people said that he kept nothing, there was nothing in Springfield, in the Illinois State House, in Chicago about his years as a State Senator. And I said, Some keep and some don't. Well, the fact that I said some do keep records, maybe it was picked up by the Hillary Clinton people and she tried – well maybe she did not personally – someone tried to run with it. Right away then, that sparked another backlash on **me**; basically the thing that got them ticked off is the fact that **I** said some Illinois State Senators do keep records. They keep records of who they see, of who their contacts are, of who saw them on what issue on what day. You know that sort of stuff.