

Documentary Viewers Being Led to Slaughter

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ordinary Americans) was picked up by gossip Web site TMZ.com late Sunday, King found himself at the center of a media swell of his own.

HOH chatted on Monday with the in-demand King, who said he was fielding e-mails from as far away as India, China and Sweden, and interview requests from national TV networks.

His office's six phone lines had been tied up all day, he said, with constituents and others leaving messages (many positive, some negative and even obscene). "I guess I'm giving voice to a lot of Americans," he told HOH.

And although in the video King blames the media for the hype, Congress was in on the Jackson fawning, he agreed. King noted that when the House observed a moment of silence for Jackson on June 26, he tried to stay out of it.

"I was in the Cloakroom, and I stayed there," he said — and he didn't have the chance to confront any of his colleagues who led the Jackson tribute.

Still, King swears he's swearing off the anti-Jacko rhetoric, promising he'll stay mum on the subject from here on out. Jackson's memorial service is today in Los Angeles.

"I don't see any sense in keeping this going," King said.

Stranger Than Fiction. Rep. Henry Waxman's (D-Calif.) wonky new tome, "The Waxman Report: How Congress Really Works," has been pretty well received, described as a "heartfelt, important little book" by one critic and "nicely proportioned [and] fast-paced" by another.

And then there's this: "Several characters in it curse, enjoy X-rated sex and die gruesomely detailed deaths."

Say what? We must have missed that part. "[S]tormy nights and cliff-hangers abound; and no-frills prose, arranged in short sentences and paragraphs for speed reading, tells the tale," the Publishers Weekly review reads, continuing with this excerpt: "'The fingers stab deep. Her eyeballs make a soft plop plop as they are pried out.' Even those with minimal attention spans will keep turning pages."

And we thought Waxman just shared his thoughts in the book on chairing the Energy

and Commerce Committee.

Well, he does. It appears that the wrong Publishers Weekly review was published in the "Editorial Reviews" section for Waxman's book on Barnesandnoble.com. That description is actually for "Superstitious," a juicy young-adult thriller written by R.L. Stine. (A similar description also was included in Barnes and Noble's own summary of the book).

The reason for the apparent mistake remains a mystery — a Barnes and Noble spokeswoman did not return multiple requests for comment by press time, and Waxman's spokeswoman and publisher didn't get back to HOH by then, either.

Crash Course. Nothing keeps Rep. Bob Filner away from the office.

The California Democrat and his staff worked out of his district office in Chula Vista on Monday — despite the fact that a suspected drunken driver had crashed into the building early Sunday morning, leaving a gaping hole in the structure.

According to published reports, the unidentified driver refused to pull over when officers tried to stop him for speeding. The driver then led police on a high-speed chase throughout the city, forcing officers to place a spiked metal strip in front of the truck to end the pursuit.

The driver lost control of the vehicle, which crashed directly into Filner's office. Police arrested the driver — who was hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries — and charged him with evading an officer, driving on a suspended license and driving



Kris Johnson, of the Architect of the Capitol gardening division, smells a tea rose in a flower bed he was pruning Monday on the West Front.

Tom Williams/Roll Call

under the influence of alcohol.

No one else was hurt, but Filner's office suffered major damage. Much of the front of the building was knocked down, and photos from the scene show an array of broken glass and plaster, destroyed furniture and plenty of dust and other debris.

Still, Filner and his staff made it to work. "The mess was cleaned up as much as possible and staff were able to enter through the front by this morning, but I don't know how long it will take to fix the

building completely," spokeswoman Alexis Gelperin told HOH on Monday.

Dinner and a Movie. As bad as Capitol Hill dining options seem, they could soon look even worse. That's if you check out the gross-out documentary "Food Inc.," which is being screened at the Capitol Visitor Center on Thursday night.

The film reveals the less-than-appetizing underbelly of the American food industry, making it more of an educational experience than a romantic date-night flick.

Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.), who's hosting the screening, isn't expecting the film's message will get a universal thumbs-up review: She's bracing for a whining-fest from big agriculture, farmers, drugmakers, veterinarians and fast-food companies about legislation that she has proposed to limit how antibiotics are used in animals.

"The screening will show people just how bad the food industry is and, with luck, be a wake-up call for staffers and Members — and the public," Slaughter spokesman Vince Morris told HOH.

Mm, popcorn, anyone?

Overheard on the Hill. "I saw far more drugs at Georgetown Law Center than I ever saw in the military."

— Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) revealing in a profile in Monday's Washington Post that his law-school days were much smokier than those he spent in Vietnam.

Please send your hot tips, juicy gossip or comments to hoh@rollcall.com.

Next Comptroller General Must Be Above Politics

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works for and whose job it is to support Congress. While the commission members and their staff no doubt have an instinctive sense of what is important, their decisions are being made on behalf of their colleagues, as well as the taxpayer, and therefore may be best served by applying an objective set of criteria that will serve the interests of the institution of Congress.

To work with Capitol Hill, the next comptroller general of the United States must:

- Be nonpartisan but not politically blind.
- Possess political savvy and personal knowledge and experience about Congress.

- Care about the institution of Congress.
- Have the presence and the ability to establish effective one-on-one relationships with Senators, Representatives and others.
- Have excellent communication skills.
- Be committed to educating and expand-

ing the knowledge of all in Congress and their staffs.

- Be a thought leader who can grasp complex issues, organize seemingly disparate facts and events, and help frame approaches to address public needs.

- Help Congress succeed at its responsibilities — in authorizing, appropriating, overseeing and in effective representation of their states and districts.

- Capable of saying "yes" and "no" to Congress.

Perhaps most important, the nominee for comptroller general of the United States must emerge unscathed by politics.

Steven L. Katz served as counsel to the then-Senate Governmental Affairs Committee and as director and senior adviser to then-Comptroller General David Walker. Jonathan D. Breul is the executive director of the IBM Center for the Business of Government. He previously worked for the Office of Management and Budget, is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's graduate Public Policy Institute.

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What makes having a deep fiscal and budgetary knowledge of the government central to the job of comptroller general?

BOWSHER: It remains a core part of GAO's mission from both the audit standpoint and the still-evolving financial and fiscal crises.

WALKER: It is the dominant subject matter knowledge for the CG, who is uniquely qualified to address key sustainability and cross-governmental challenges.

What will GAO's most important role be for the next comptroller general?

BOWSHER: The current and still-evolving financial crisis and America's recovery and stabilization.

WALKER: Help Congress address key policy and operational challenges, includ-

ing transformation reforms facing the government.

Is the GAO High-Risk Series still relevant, and how can the GAO work more effectively with Congress and agencies to get off the list?

BOWSHER: Yes, the GAO High-Risk is still very relevant, and there are a number of examples including at IRS where landing on the High-Risk List is what caused leaders to finally pay attention to problems.

WALKER: Yes, it is an important focus. Many key items require action by both the Congress and the executive branch in order to achieve sustainable success. OMB should continue to work with GAO to require action plans by agencies to get off GAO's High-Risk list as soon as feasible.