

High Noon in Hollywood ...

✘ For the past few days I've been thinking a lot about who bothers me more – the little psycho with the \$2 haircut who runs North Korea or the liberal weasels in the entertainment industry who don't have the guts to say, "Hey Kim, bite me! We're running the movie about you ... and if you do not like it too @#\$\$%^ bad! "

You want to know what a whack job Kim Jong-un is? He committed this great big cyber attack on Sony over a dopey movie starring Seth Rogen and some other guy whose name I already forgot. If Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep were the stars of "The Interview" I might understand what got the Pillsbury Dough Boy in Pyongyang so mad. Memo to dictator with a few screws loose: Lighten up. It's a comedy!

You know who Kim reminds me of: all those liberal twits on American college campuses who have instituted speech codes and punish offenders for telling jokes that are deemed, by the little sissies, as "inappropriate."

Which brings us to the crowd who will never be confused with profiles in courage.

Let's start with those feckless, sniveling crapweasels hiding under your desks at Sony, as Jonah (no relation) Goldberg refers to them. They decided not to premiere their film as planned on Christmas Day, fearing the North Koreans would release even more embarrassing emails if they didn't deep six the movie.

Then Sony people said they wouldn't release the movie at all because theater owners refused to show it, after threats were made that there'd be another 9/11 if the movie ever saw the light of day. Just before Christmas Sony announced that several hundred theaters said they'd show the movie. But they were mostly the "art" type movie houses. The big theater

chains were by and large playing it safe.

Their lawyers couldn't possibly believe that North Korea had that kind of juice. But lawyers being lawyers said, "To hell with freedom of speech and all that crap. We'll get sued if anything bad happens."

Let's be generous and say they have a point. This being the United States of Litigation, you just know there'd be a lawsuit if some moviegoer so much as got a kernel of popcorn stuck between his teeth while watching the film. An actual attack in retaliation for running the movie would cost the theaters gazillions. But as I say, North Korea doesn't have the juice to set off bombs in movie houses in the United States.

And what about the bigger Hollywood community – you know, the pious Hollywood community that never tires of telling us that by making "courageous" films they're the ones who keep the torch of freedom burning in America (but would rather drink Drano than work with a conservative) – and who think "edgy" means making fun of right-of-center values.

Well, superstar George Clooney sent a petition around to the Hollywood glitterati asking them to stand strong in the face of extortion and intimidation from North Korea. Here's part of the petition:

"This is not just an attack on Sony. It involves every studio, every network, every business and every individual in this country. That is why we fully support Sony's decision not to submit to these hackers' demands. We know that to give in to these criminals now will open the door for any group that would threaten freedom of expression, privacy and personal liberty. We hope these hackers are brought to justice but until they are, we will not stand in fear. We will stand together."

How many signed? Try none. Zero. Clooney was Marshal Kane in

High Noon, who couldn't find even one courageous friend to help him fight the bad guys. Clooney, like Kane, found out that everyone in town was scared – scared not of killer gunslingers, but of a bunch of North Korean nerds who might hack their emails, which would cause more angst when we found what some producer said about some actor. Gasp!

And these are people who genuinely believe they're brave.

I don't agree with President Obama often, but I agree with what he said at his news conference about Sony. "I am sympathetic to the concerns they faced, having said all that, yes I think they made a mistake. ... We cannot have a society in which some dictator someplace can start imposing censorship here in the United States. Because if somebody is able to intimidate folks out of releasing a satirical movie, imagine what they start doing when they see a documentary they don't like or news reports that they don't like or even worse, imagine if producers and distributors and others start engaging in self censorship because they don't want to offend the sensibilities of somebody whose sensibilities probably need to be offended. That's not who we are. That's not what America is about."

Good for President Obama. We needed to hear that from him. Better late than never, I guess. But if he had spoken up earlier, if he had encouraged Sony and the big theater chains not to back down, that probably would have changed the script and Sony and Hollywood wouldn't look as bad as they do. But that's the view from the rear view mirror. The question now is, how does the president respond?

He could take the advice of the Wall Street Journal, which said "the U.S. government [should] pay Sony Pictures for the rights to 'The Interview' and release the movie for free into the public domain. The comedy about an assassination attempt on Kim Jong-un could then be seen by the world and translated into Korean, loaded on USB sticks, and floated into North

Korea by balloons.”

Balloons are okay, but if I were the Secretary of Getting Even in the Obama Administration, here’s what I would do: I’d get the best computer minds in Silicon Valley to figure out a way to run “The Interview” – with all the dialogue dubbed in Korean – on every TV set ... *in North Korea!* And I’d make sure we put enough gizmos in there so Kim and his gang couldn’t stop it.

I know, brilliant. Thank you.

Then I’d put the part where Kim gets vaporized and his head explodes on a loop that goes on for a couple of days. I’d also run a warning in big Korean type over that scene: “Laughing at your psychopathic leader can be dangerous to your health.”

That would be one way America could tell the little creep in Pyongyang to stuff it.

As for the little creeps in Hollywood: Do us a favor. Stay under your desks. Your sanctimony bores us. And your cowardice embarrasses us – at least those of us who live east of the Pacific Coast Highway.