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The Bush Drug Sting, The Sins of the Father, The Sins of the Son and -- The Smoking Airplane

Why Does George W. Bush Fly in Drug Smuggler Barry Seal's Airplane?

by

Daniel Hopsicker and Michael C. Ruppert

It has all the makings of a major box office thriller: Texas Governor and Republican Presidential contender George W. Bush and his brother Jeb, allegedly caught on videotape in 1985 picking up kilos of cocaine at a Florida airport in a DEA sting set up by Barry Seal

An ensuing murderous cover-up featuring Seal's public assassination less than a year later by a hit team—the members of which, when caught, reveal to their attorneys during trial that their actions were being directed by then, National Security Council (NSC) staffer - Lt. Colonel Oliver North

And a private turboprop King Air 200 supposedly caught on tape in the sting with FAA ownership records leading directly to the CIA and some of the perpetrators of the most notorious (and never punished) major financial frauds of the '80s. —Greek shippers paying bribes to obtain loans from American companies that would never be repaid.—An American executive snatching the charred remains of a \$10,000 payoff check from an ashtray in an Athens restaurant—Swiss police finding bank accounts used for kickbacks and bribes

Add to this mix the now irrefutable proof, some of it from the CIA itself, that then Vice President George H.W. Bush was a decision maker in illegal Contra support operations connected to the "unusual" acquisition of aircraft and that his staff participated in key financial, operational and political decisions

All these events lead inexorably to one unanswered question: How did this one plane go from being controlled by Barry Seal, the biggest drug smuggler in American history, to becoming, according to state officials, a favored airplane of Texas Governor George W. Bush?

Three months into an exhaustive investigation of persistent reports dating to 1995 that there exists an incriminating videotape of current Republican Presidential front-runner Bush caught in a hastily-aborted DEA cocaine sting, the central allegation remains unproven

But some startling details *have* been confirmed, amid a raft of new suspicions emerging

from conflicting FAA records. Those records, along with other irrefutable documents, point to the existence of far more than mere happenstance or dark "conspiracy theorist speculations" in the matter of how George W. Bush came to be flying the friendly Texas skies in an airplane that was a crown jewel in the drug smuggling fleet of the notorious Barry Seal. Those documents reveal - beyond any doubt - that in the 1980s Barry Seal, with whom the CIA has consistently denied any relationship, piloted and controlled airplanes owned by the same Phoenix Arizona company, Greycas, which in a 1998 bankruptcy filing, was revealed to have been a subsidiary of the same company that owned the now defunct CIA proprietary airline Southern Air Transport.

The investigation started with a lead into the history of the aircraft (a 1982 Beechcraft King Air 200 with FAA registration number N6308F - Serial Number BB-1014). The handwritten tail number was found in records kept by Seal's widow and later linked to other "hard paper" records left by Seal after his 1986 assassination by "drug traffickers" who were subsequently connected to Oliver North. Those records, including leasing agreements, insurance policies and maintenance records, exhibit a deliberately-confusing "paper trail" of convoluted ownership recalling the 'glory' days of the Iran Contra hearings, where the machinations of American covert intelligence operators were unmasked before a disbelieving public.

Combined with revelations in a 1998 CIA Inspector General's report of Contra-era cocaine trafficking in which the CIA admits to "briefing" then Vice President Bush on how it lied to Congress about cocaine trafficking by its agents, it becomes clear that father and son have common secrets to conceal from the American public. That report, Volume II of the CIA Inspector General's report into allegations of Contra cocaine trafficking can be viewed at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/cocaine2/index.html>. A detailed discussion of that report, along with relevant excerpts is available at www.copvcia.com.

Unraveling the plane's tangled and colorful history requires, first, a brief look backwards at the momentous year of 1982, when President Reagan first introduced the public version of "Project Democracy," in which he called for a "crusade for freedom."

What it became instead was a license to murder, loot and steal. This climate was the nursery into which N6308F was born.

"The War of '82"

The detonations had rumbled like Armageddon along the rocky course of the Rio Negro in Nicaragua throughout the night of March 14, 1982... Concrete bridges groaned suddenly under their own weight, crashing in avalanches of black dust in a dark landscape seen through night-vision goggles. In Washington D.C., it was time to break out the champagne. War was breaking out in Central America. Just two days later Barry Seal took possession of the first of many planes supplied to him through CIA Director Bill Casey's "off-the-books" Enterprise.

There were more than 100 U.S. advisers in Honduras by March of 1982. In April, the chief of the Honduran Army, General Gustavo Alvarez, said that his country would agree to U.S. intervention in Central America if it were the only way to "preserve peace."

"Up to March 1982 you could still change your policy," recalled a member of the NSC Core Group In Charge as he spoke to reporters later. "The issue was still the question of support for El Salvador's rebels. If that ended, so could pressure on Managua. But once the first forces of Nicaraguan exiles were trained and set in motion, any real negotiating became much harder. The blowing of the bridges was an announcement."

Throughout 1982, Democrats, fearing that President Reagan was pushing the United States into another Vietnam-style quagmire, tried to cut off aid to the Contras. It was precisely at this time, the height of CIA Director Bill Casey's frenetic efforts to ward off these

Congressional efforts, that Barry Seal acquired use of not one but several brand new Beech Craft King Air 200s. Ownership of the planes had been deliberately obscured through a number of convoluted transactions involving Phoenix-based corporations suspected of being "fronts" for General John Singlaub's "Enterprise" activities. Based in Phoenix, Arizona, Retired Major General Singlaub organized in early 1982 an American chapter of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), called the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF), with a loan from Taiwan. Funding for Seal's planes would come from sources close to those efforts.

"Jack" Singlaub had a long history of involvement in covert operations, beginning with service in the World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He had served as CIA Desk Officer for China in 1949 and Deputy Chief of Station in South Korea during the Korean War, and during the Vietnam War he commanded the Special Operations Group Military Assistance Command, Vietnam--Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG), which participated in the CIA's Operation Phoenix assassination program.

Singlaub's efforts, and Seal's as well, had been necessitated by the shocking scandals of the 1970s combined with drastic reductions in "official" CIA capabilities in the Carter years. Until then, the CIA had controlled a huge network of planes, pilots and companies for use in paramilitary situations. But with the end of the Vietnam War and the public revulsion at disclosures of out of control CIA covert operations, many of those assets (such as the infamous Air America) were dissolved or sold off.

Consequently, when the Reagan Administration sought to expand covert paramilitary operations in Central America and elsewhere, the Agency was forced to rebuild much of its capabilities illegally, relying frequently on outside assets, usually retained under contract, like Barry Seal. The Contra war put everything into high gear.

The CIA and the Army jointly agreed to set up a special aviation operation called "**Seaspray**," New York Times reporter Seymour Hersh revealed in 1987. [This was old news to local and state police in affected areas. Cops had already seen the cynical (and perhaps intentional) manipulation of this operation flooding America with a river of drugs. When law enforcement authorities debriefed convicted "drug smuggler" Seal in late 1985, one of the cops present brusquely began by stating, "We already know about **Seaspray**."]]

Everybody Will Be There.

The "boys" were getting ready to go to war in the Spring of 1982:

-- CIA agent **Dewey Clarridge** put a proposition to Contra leader Eden Pastora. "He would become the star of the second revolution as he had been the star of the first," -- **John Hull**, whom Congressional sources said worked for the CIA since at least the early 1970s, rented a Contra safe house in San Jose, Costa Rica at CIA request. -- Retired Air Force Major General **Richard Secord** began managing an operation in which Israel shipped weapons captured in Lebanon to a CIA arms depot in San Antonio, Texas, for re-shipment to the Contras. -- **Felix Rodriguez** drew on his Vietnam experience and wrote a five-page proposal for the creation of an elite mobile strike force, called the Tactical Task Force (TTF), that would "be ideal for the *pacification* efforts in El Salvador and Guatemala."-- And at this exact same time, in the Spring of 1982, **Barry Seal** began flying private planes into a then-obscure airport in the secluded mountains of western Arkansas known as Mena. He moved his base of operations from Louisiana to hook up with the CIA, which was anxious to use Seal's fleet of planes to ferry both legal and illegal supplies to Contra camps in Honduras and Costa Rica.

Rodriguez dubbed the search and destroy units "Pink Teams" and advocated using napalm and cluster bombs to give them "more destructive power." Rodriguez's proposal included a map of Central America which indicated that Nicaragua would be a target of Pink Team operations (based in El Salvador and Honduras).

Favorably impressed, Vice President George (Poppy) Bush's National Security Advisor Donald Gregg sent Rodriguez's Pink Team plan to then Deputy National Security Adviser Bud McFarlane on March 17, along with a secret one-page memo on "anti-guerrilla operations in Central America."

This was also, according to later Iran-Contra testimony of Medellin Cartel money man Ramon Milian Rodriguez, when he began to launder, at Felix Rodriguez' request, \$10 million from the cartel for the Contras. In secret, sworn testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations, Milian Rodriguez claimed that he had been solicited by his old friend Felix Rodriguez.

Also early in 1982 a new covert unit of the Armed Forces was set up by General Richard Stilwell. Known as the Intelligence Support Activity (ISA), it became a separate entity in the Army's secret world of special operations, with its own commander, a Col. Jerry King. The army's involvement in secret operations would first become known to the House and Senate intelligence committees in early 1982, when they discovered a project known as **Yellow Fruit**, which ferried undercover Army operatives to Honduras, where they trained Honduran troops for bloody hit-and-run operations into Nicaragua.

Through private front companies, like the ones that supplied Barry Seal with his fleet of smuggling aircraft, Operation **Yellow Fruit** ferried weapons like rapid-fire cannons to CIA operatives. It was these same operatives who later mined Nicaragua's harbors and raided oil depots, all in violation of Congressional legislation barring the Defense Department and the Agency from taking any action aimed at overthrowing the Sandinistas.

The Army went to outside businessmen and arms dealers to make off-the-books airplane purchases, with funds that had been "laundered" through secret Army finance offices at Fort Meade, Md. More than \$325 million was appropriated for the Special Operations Division of the Army between 1981 and the autumn of 1983. Had any of these operations become public then it would have caused enormous political damage to the Reagan Administration's campaign in Central America, according to a 1987 New York Times report by Seymour Hersh.

"Enter CIA Agent Adler Berriman Seal" The flight plans for Seal's drug enterprise provided the perfect cover for the illicit resupply missions. Seal's planes would fly from Mena to Medellin Cartel airstrips in the mountains of Colombia and Venezuela, make refueling stops in Panama and Honduras, and then return to Mena, where, en route, the planes would drop parachute-equipped duffel bags loaded with cocaine over Seal-controlled farms in Louisiana.

"His well-connected and officially protected smuggling operation based at Mena accounted for billions in drugs and arms from 1982 until his murder four years later," said Dr. Roger Morris and Sally Denton in their book **Partners in Power**. They also reported that coded records of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) showed Barry Seal on the payroll beginning in 1982.

"My investigation established a conspiratorial period, chronologically, with a first overt act and a last overt act. The first overt act was April 12, 1982," stated Arkansas state criminal investigator Russell Welch, who was charged, he thought, with digging into Seal's Mena activities. Between March and December 1982, according to law enforcement records, Seal fitted nine of his aircraft with the latest electronic equipment, paying the \$750,000 bill - as was his custom - in cash.

The effects of Barry Seal's efforts to take weapons one way and bring drugs the other were soon visible, in ruined lives in the U.S. and in the maimed bodies appearing all over Central America.

"Riding the Elephant Herd" Barry Seal was not alone. When small private planes began to bomb the Nicaraguan capital, resulting in the crash of a Cessna 404 at the Managua airport, an account of how three Cessnas were secretly transported from the New York Air National Guard to Central America for the raid on Managua reached the press. It was later learned that custody of a number of additional planes were moved from the U.S. Air Force in a top-secret Joint Chiefs operation code-named **"Elephant Herd,"** on to the CIA, via a Delaware aviation company where they were armed, and then transferred to their ultimate destination, the Contras.

A senior administration official admitted that small noncombatant military aircraft had been transferred from the Air Force to the Contras through the CIA. One company involved, Summit Aviation, was doing regular business with Barry Seal according to records in his widow's possession. In addition, according to Congressional sources, Summit, known to do Contract work for the CIA, had former CIA personnel on the payroll, and was linked through ownership records to the Cessna that crashed while bombing Managua.

That aircraft, according to FAA records, was purchased by Summit Aviation in October 1982 from Trager Aviation Center in Lima, Ohio. On the same day that Summit purchased the plane, the company sold it to Investair Leasing Corp. of McLean, Va.. Investair, which has an unlisted telephone number, does Contract work for the CIA, according to Congressional sources. Bruce W. Trager, who sold the Cessna to Summit for \$308,872, says the deal was "put together" by Patrick J. Foley, Summit's "military director."

In addition to its work for Investair, Summit maintained and modified planes for Armairco, another company involved in covert government projects. Armairco, organized in 1982, also bought several multimillion-dollar Beechcraft King Airs, like Barry Seal's. Those aircraft were purchased directly from Beech in a procedure normally used only for military projects, according to Beech officials and aviation experts.

When asked whether Armairco's government work included activities in Central America, an Armairco official said, "That may well be."



<click image to enlarge>

The Beechcraft King Air 200 has been in production since the mid 1970's. A little less than seven hundred of them have been manufactured to date. The twin engine turboprop has a pressurized cabin capable, with different configurations of seating up to nine passengers. It has a cruising speed of approximately 330 mph and a cruising range of more than 1,800 miles. New plane prices in 1982 started at around \$1,700,000 based on equipment.

N6308F

The convoluted, pretzel-like paper history of the airplane that once belonged to Barry Seal and is today used by Texas Governor George W. Bush begins when the title to the brand new aircraft was first recorded by Portland, Oregon dealer Flightcraft, Inc.

Flightcraft's President, David R. Hinson, a former military and commercial airline pilot active in the Republican Party in Oregon, was, according to *The Oregonian*, at the time under consideration to head the FAA. The paper stated that Hinson had met with Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Hanford Dole to express interest in the job after travelling to Washington to promote himself for the post. Helping Bill Casey subvert the will of Congress, presumably, did nothing to hurt his chances.

N6308F was spoken for, several times over, even before it arrived at Flightcraft's facilities in the Spring of 1982.

"I don't think we're going to help you - I mean "*be able*" to help you said a nervous Phil Carrell of Flightcraft, Inc. when contacted for information by FTW. Carrell, a sales executive who was working at Flightcraft when "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot" was originally sold, told FTW that as far as he knew any records of the aircraft were no longer in existence. He referred us to the FAA title records for answers. We wish that answers were what we had found.

According to records located by Dan Hopsicker in his investigation, a now defunct Lake Arrowhead, California firm, Ken Miller Aircraft Sales, entered into leasing agreements with developer Eugene Glick in February 1982, two months before the manufacturer's title was transferred to Flightcraft. Ken Miller Aircraft appears nowhere in the FAA title history of the plane. Ken Miller Aviation is also no longer in existence. Nonetheless, in February 1982, Ken Miller Aviation entered into a leasing agreement with real estate magnate Eugene Glick for the brand new aircraft. In that agreement, Glick and his wife agreed to make eighty-four monthly payments of more than \$37,000 (\$2,835,672) for the airplane which had a new purchase price of \$2,010,556. No record linking Ken Miller Aviation to Flightcraft is known to exist.

On paper at least, according to Contracts dating from February of 1982, the plane was owned by a Greyhound Bus Lines subsidiary, Greycas, which in turn leased it to a mysterious Phoenix firm in close proximity to John Singlaub's Enterprise operations named Systems Marketing, Inc." Systems Marketing then leased it to Continental Desert Properties which was the firm owned by Glick. In the final step, Glick leased the plane over to Barry Seal.

In a Contract dated March 21, 1983 N6308F was leased by Continental Desert Properties to Seal's firm Baton Rouge Aviation . Insurance policies found in Seal's private papers confirm that Barry Seal subsequently purchased an insurance policy on the aircraft.

What, exactly, was the *purpose* of this convoluted ownership record? What was it designed to conceal? The answer lies in the very definition of "tradedcraft," a term for what it is that spies and covert operators do to operate in the dark. The "front" companies were in place to act as "cut-outs," layers of insulation, between the spy agency -- in this case Bill Casey's CIA--and the covert operative--, in this case, Barry Seal.

FAA ownership records show that Gene Glick, who lived on Hope Ranch near Ronald Reagan's Rancho del Cielo in Santa Barbara, California, leased "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot" as well as several of Barry Seal's other planes during the same years that Seal was most active in drug and weapons smuggling 1982-5. Other documents located by Hopsicker confirm that Glick was also actively helping Seal purchase ocean-going vessels for use in drug smuggling activities and as stationary platforms for the CIA to use off the coast of Nicaragua in covert operations.

An FBI agent had dismissed Glick's importance to Dan Hopsicker, which fueled his suspicions early on. "He's just a money launderer," said Delbert Hahn, who was the Special Agent in Charge of an Inter-Agency Organized Crime Drug Task Force looking into Barry Seal's organization back in the middle 1980s. At least in this case, Glick's behavior was consistent with Iran-Contra "bust out" operations because the lease defaulted in two years. The plane was repossessed.

According to FTW contributing editor Catherine Austin Fitts who, as a former Wall Street investment banker and Assistant Secretary of Housing, served on the Resolution Trust Corporation in the wake of the S&L scandal, "This could have been a substantial cash pay-off to the concerned parties." Fitts, who also served on the "clean-up" committee for BCCI (a bank with abundant connections to CIA covert operations, financial fraud and drug

trafficking) observed that the pattern here is typical of those seen by enforcement officials in that era.

"It is worth researching to see if there were substantial cash pay-offs to the concerned parties," said Fitts. "If the lease were insured at or near its full value and defaulted early as it did here in around two years; if the total value of lease > payments were \$2.8 million and if the lessor had paid only \$2.1 million for the aircraft then any insurance pay-off or "write down" after only a year or two could have netted a profit of a half million dollars or more for the covert operators. This type of insurance fraud was used routinely during Iran-Contra to finance covert operations"



<click image to enlarge>

The CIA Gets Busted --Yet Again

The circle was completed with the discovery that "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot," as well as several other planes used by Barry Seal, was in reality owned by the same company revealed in 1998 bankruptcy proceedings to have owned the notorious CIA airline Southern Air Transport (SAT). Congressional and public records from the era establish Southern Air as a legendary CIA proprietary - second only to Air America - and as being connected to Secord, Singluab, Rodriguez, Casey and George H.W. Bush.

Among its long list of dubious "achievements," Southern Air had owned the C123 used by Seal in the Nicaragua sting operation which made Barry Seal famous. That same aircraft was later shot down over Nicaragua in 1986 and the lone survivor Eugene Hasenfus was captured alive by Sandinista soldiers.. That is what started the Iran-Contra scandal to begin with. No one knew--or admitted knowing--just who owned Southern Air Transport back in 1986, although government officials all swore up and down that it wasn't the CIA.

Southern Air's ownership by Greyhound Leasing, which became the entity called Finova, was only disclosed after no one was looking, when SAT went into bankruptcy in 1998. This is the first time the holding company, Finova, has been revealed for what it clearly is, an Agency front, set up in Arizona and headquartered in Canada to escape American financial disclosure requirements.

Suddenly, on June 14, 1984, after passage of the second Boland Amendment and the consolidation of Contra operations under Oliver North the plane was sold twice in one day. According to journalist, producer and author Dan Hopsicker, "This was at a period in time when Barry knew he was on the way out." The plane went first to a mysterious Morgan B. Mitchell of Vale, Oregon, and then to Chevrolet Dealer Merrill Bean of Ogden Utah. Bean, curiously, gave the Dover, Delaware address of the "Prentis Hall [sic] Corporation" on his FAA registration.

Students of the CIA have long been aware of the Agency's affinity for hiding its assets in Delaware shell corporations. But, to be fair, many other companies do so for reasons of convenience. In an interview Bean stated that he had incorporated in Delaware as a legal necessity because of the needs of his investors. "Delaware is a very convenient place for many kinds of corporations to incorporate and many large corporations and multi-nationals do so," Bean told FTW. "Because other companies I was in partnership with were incorporated there I chose to do so also. It was much easier that way and it was a requirement of the partners who were investing."

However, Delaware officials in the Secretary of State's office said that Bean's company, Prentis Hall [not Prentice Hall], does not exist. And in the FAA records connected to Bean's ownership of "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot" we find yet another unexplained gap in FAA records. Whenever major mechanical repairs are made on an aircraft, the involved mechanic is required to complete an FAA Form 337. In December 1989, FAA certified mechanic Irvin Strayer installed some routine de-icing equipment on the plane. The mechanic, reviewing what should have been original ownership documents, listed the owner as United Insurance of Ogden Utah. Nowhere in FAA title paperwork does United Insurance appear as an owner. And a spokesman for the Utah State Department of Insurance told FTW that there had never been a United Insurance licensed to do business in the state.

"It was an insurance company that a group of car dealers had formed to handle title and financing and other insurance for car sales," said Bean. "I bought the other guys out of the airplane and had some repairs done before I sold to Corporate Wings."

Someone should have told the FAA. Or perhaps someone changed the FAA's records. Stranger things have happened. Bean does not recall if he changed the records to reflect this or not.

A Likely Suspect

In what will become a long litany of links between Barry Seal's activities and the financial fraud of the 1980's, Merrill Bean was also involved in what *The Salt Lake City Tribune* called "the worst financial disaster in Utah since the Great Depression." That disaster was the en masse 1980s failure of Utah thrifts -- hybrid financial institutions that offered high interest rates and consumer loans -- and the collapse of the insurance fund that was supposed to protect their deposits.

Because Utah's thrifts were heavily underinsured, the actions of Bean's thrift, Western Heritage Thrift and Loan, left a trail of broken hearts, and broken people.

"We had just moved to Utah from California two years ago," 58-year old Irene Culver told *The Salt Lake City Tribune* in 1986. "My husband Kent was an aircraft mechanic but he has Parkinson's Disease. We put half our savings in there [Western Heritage] and bought a little fixer-upper with the other half. When the State closed everything, I thought, 'I suppose we're lucky.' My Social Security should start in four years. We were going to put a new roof on and install a gas furnace because the electricity's expensive. Now we can't do it, so we've got half the house closed off."

Bean told FTW, "I was Director of that failed thrift. I came aboard when it was almost going under. And I poured some money into it to try to save it and it didn't happen. I was hoping that my \$75,000 that I put into it would help revive it." While admitting that he was on the Board of Directors of Western Heritage, Bean stated emphatically that he was not "a Honcho."

FTW wonders how an obviously savvy businessman who owns several aircraft and car dealerships believed that \$75,000 would turn around a failing savings and loan. In "**The Mafia, The CIA and George Bush**," Texas journalist Pete Brewton documented how much of the S&L scandal was connected to Iran-Contra operations and illegal covert operations of the CIA. In many of those schemes a \$75,000 or similar "buy-in" might have secured the mighty a seat at a highly-lucrative but completely criminal feeding frenzy.

Disappearing' Money

Following the "paper trail" of Barry Seal's King Air 200 revealed connections to some other unsavory perpetrators of the major financial frauds that -- like the S&L scandal -- marred the 1980s. Greyhound Leasing, or "Greycas" for short, was at the center of a huge and seemingly inexplicable financial fraud that, like the half-trillion dollar S&L scandal, no one

seemed too concerned about unraveling. The corporation was openly and eventually very publicly looted. Afterwards, company management pretended to be "baffled" as to how it could have happened.

It went down like this:

Greycas Inc. and another Greyhound unit, Greyhound Leasing & Financial Corp., were bilked of over **\$ 75 million** by one Sheldon Player, a former Vernal, Utah, resident assumed to be in the machine and oilfield equipment sales business, who gained the money through fraudulently obtained loans from Greyhound. Greycas then devised an elaborate cover-up scheme to prevent disclosure of details about the loss.

This episode began at the beginning of the 1980's with one \$ 600,000 loan. Player and his companies would sell Greycas heavy machine tools, lease them back and then pretend to sublease the expensive devices to end-users. In most cases the machines, which were collateral for the loans, were non-existent.

By 1984, Player had borrowed nearly \$ 8 million from Greyhound in the same scheme. That year he asked for \$ 40 million in new loans to continue his transactions. A total of \$23.5 million had been disbursed by the time the company first got suspicious and confronted Player. He was told the company wanted to inspect the machinery that it was supposed to have owned. Remember, this was a company owned by the CIA front Finova. Player resisted, leading some company executives to wonder about the "integrity of the transactions with Player."

Then, incredibly, despite the company's doubts about Player's credibility and integrity, and in spite of Greycas' inability to make inspections of the equipment, the company lent Player **another \$ 24 million**. In the ensuing months lucky Sheldon Player drew \$66 million on the credit line authorized by the company.

This was an Iran-Contra bust-out.

Nice Work if You Can Get It

Anyone who has ever borrowed money for a car or home must admire the chutzpah of Sheldon Player, whom the business press took to calling an "admitted con artist." Yet Player had no history of financial fraud that we could discover before this, which took place **at the same time** that officers of a Swiss-based subsidiary were defrauding Greycas of another \$120 million, in a purportedly unrelated scandal that sent shock waves from Athens to Phoenix.

"Many borrowers failed to make even the initial monthly payment," court documents state. The company's accountants wrote that "fraudulent and dishonest acts . . . resulted directly in a loss of \$119,684,598." Not so, said the company's hapless General Counsel, who responded, weakly, that the loss has been reduced to a mere \$72 million.

The fraud included checks written as bribes on napkins in Swiss restaurants and then set afireÉ the reported possibility that one of the participants was blackmailing other participants and some mighty upset shareholders who filed lawsuits in Phoenix urging the Greyhound board to take legal action against top officials. The troubling question that puzzled business reporters never were able to answer was this: Why were they giving money away down at Greyhound during the 1980's?

Being Connected Means Never Having To Say You're Sorry The disposition of the resulting criminal trial of Sheldon Player is an illustration of the maxim that in George Bush's America, "Being connected means never having to say you're sorry."

When Sheldon Player was sentenced, he received a five-year sentence. Yup. **Five** years -- one year for each \$13 million he stole. This is clearly a deal that, if offered to regular

Americans--as opposed to the CIA-related kind who killed Barry Seal --would have people lining up around the Phoenix Federal Courthouse to sign up. After receiving this draconian sentence Mr. Player was given additional time to settle personal affairs before entering prison. No one can say American justice is not compassionate. And prison, for Mr. Player, consisted of the Lompoc Camp, a minimum-security facility known as one of 10 to 12 "country club" institutions in operation around the nation, according to Dick Murray, community programs manager for the U.S. Bureau of Prisons in Phoenix.

Former Greycas official Robert Bertrand, who apparently covered up for Player's fraud, lucky fellow, never went to prison. Instead he resigned his position at Greyhound in 1986, and was soon appointed the new President and Chief Executive Officer of Finalco Inc. [Sounds like Finova doesn't it?], an equipment finance and brokerage company which just happens to be based in McLean, Virginia, the home of the CIA.

(Back?) Into the Hands of the Guvnah

Merrill Bean, the Utah Chevy dealer who acquired "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot" in 1984 sold the plane in May of 1990 to Corporate Wings of Salt Lake City. Two days later Corporate Wings sold it to Gantt Aviation of Georgetown, Texas, which a month later sold it to the State of Texas Aircraft Pool where it resides today. Johnny Gantt, President of Gantt Aviation told FTW that he probably knew that the State of Texas had a bid out when he acquired "Zero-Eight-Foxtrot". At the time the Governor of Texas was Bill Clements and George "W", a good friend, was owner of the Texas Rangers.

A genial Gantt explained that he had probably been aware that the State was "putting out a bid" for a King Air and scooped up the plane. Press clipping show that Gantt Aviation is a large dealership with a long history of providing planes to the State of Texas. It was a done deal within weeks and Zero-Eight-Foxtrot found the home where it lives happily today.

At the beginning of this article we outlined briefly how a tail number in Barry Seal's papers started this investigation. It actually began when author Terry Reed announced at a Los Angeles public gathering in July, 1999 that a video tape might surface during the 2000 Presidential campaign "showing George W and Jeb arriving at Tamiami Airport in 1985 to pick up two kilos of cocaine for a party. Said Reed, "They flew in on a King Air 200." Subsequent statements made by Barry Seal and recorded in Reed's 1995 book ***Compromised*** recount how Seal bragged about how he had video of "the Bush boys" doing coke. Other witnesses located by both writers of this story, who were in relevant official positions in 1985, have confirmed that the described Tamiami sting took place. All, in fear for their lives, have refused to go on the record.

Does George "W" use Zero-Eight-Foxtrot? According to Jerry Daniels, Executive Director of the Texas State Aircraft Pooling Board, "He used to fly on that airplane all the time. He stopped when he became a Presidential candidate because the State won't let you fly its aircraft for political purposes." But FTW learned that if and when Dubyah is back in the state and on state business, he probably will because Dubyah is a licensed pilot and Zero-Eight-Foxtrot is one of his favorites though he doesn't get to pilot much any more.

Said one savvy Pol of George W, "*The last thing we need in this country is another President with lingering drug scandals in his past--and maybe present.*"

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Daniel Hopsicker is the producer of a business news television show airing internationally on NBC called Global Business 2000. That is, he was the Producer until Dan produced a 2-hour special on the CIA and drugs, Mena, Arkansas and Barry Seal called "The Secret Heartbeat of America." Dan was told by his biggest friend in Hollywood, "Your show will

not air while Clinton is President." When a subsequent attack in broad daylight on Wilshire Boulevard outside the Federal Building in Los Angeles confirmed his friend's judgment and prediction, Mr. Hopsicker began work on a book called "**Barry and 'the boys,'**" due to be finished by the end of 1999.

Professional videotape copies of Dan's two TV specials-- a second one is on the Federal Reserve and the Bilderbergers-- may be ordered for \$19.50 plus \$4.50 s&h by calling - 941.416.3734.

Special Thanks - to *From The Wilderness* readers Mr. P. a lawyah from the South, John Carman, and "The Goddess", who contributed critical pieces to this story. You are living proof that no one is as smart as all of us and that with the Net we can beat the major media every time!

FTW's mission for readers - This story, like Watergate will be broken in increments. We need to find out how many times and on what dates Zero-Eight-Foxtrot landed at Tamiami Airport in 1985 and who was piloting. **Freedom of Information Act requests need to be very specific.** Think of creative ways to find out.

If you want to know MORE about this subject, may we recommend the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Extracts and Commentary, Vol. II CIA's IG Report- The CIA drug Economy and The Way Out- Albert Vincent Carone The Missing Link Between The CIA and The Mob |
|--|

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