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Questionable Document Causes Stir

Bill Casey Drug Letter Ordered Sealed By U.S. Judge

by

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For months now we have been telling you about a letter, purportedly written by Ronald Reagan's CIA Director, William Casey, that admits direct CIA involvement in the drug trade during the Contra War years. The letter appeared anonymously, via the U.S. Mail in the hands of Dee Ferdinand, daughter of deceased CIA operative Albert Carone who has been trying to recapture personal funds, pensions and benefits due her and her family after her father's 1990 murder. Not sure what to do with the letter she contacted retired CIA executive Ted Shackley and read him the contents. That was last spring. Shackley (according to Ferdinand, as reported in June) after hearing the letter told Ferdinand to "call the CIA and the FBI and tell them that you have this letter. Ask them to come pick it up because you are not supposed to have it."

Ferdinand gave the letter to her attorney, Ray Kohlman of Massachusetts, who also represents former Green Beret William Tyree (see Wilson story this issue). Kohlman immediately forwarded the letter to both Agencies, retaining a copy for his records. After six months of no response on the letter's authenticity from either agency Kohlman and Tyree filed it as an exhibit in a motion for a new trial for Tyree. A copy was sent to FTW at that time. FTW subsequently provided a copy to staff members from the House permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. [We have heard nothing back.]

While FTW believes strongly in the factual accuracy of the letter, especially insofar as dates, names and mission names are concerned, we cannot completely overcome our distrust of the letter's obvious butchery of the English language and misspelling of words like *McFarlane* and *Ilopango*. Even taking into account that the letter was dated (12/9/85) at a time when Casey would have been impaired by the cancerous brain tumor that took his life exactly five months later, it was difficult to believe that Richard Nixon would have affixed his signature to such a document. To FTW, the letter is plausible because, almost literally with his dying breaths, Bill Casey failed to mention head man George Bush and gave the impression that drug trafficking was an expediency of the Cold War rather than an economic prerequisite of the privileged class. The letter was continuing a cover up and it admitted guilt only for the dead and dying, or the enemies of Bill Casey and George Bush.

We decided, after interviewing people close to Casey, not to print the letter in October because we could not vouch for its authenticity - one way or the other. We still can't. The Casey letter was also introduced by Tyree in a second suit against the Department of the Army, last August. (Tyree v. U.S. Department of the Army, 99-CV-2709) and events in that case have since forced us to change our mind.

On November 8th, United States District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, who is presiding in the Army suit, **unilaterally, and without any request by either Tyree, or the Army, or the CIA**, ordered the Casey letter sealed. Tyree's attorney, Ray Kohlman (also participating in the MLK lawsuit in Memphis) was flabbergasted. He told FTW, "In all the cases involving classified material I have ever seen or been involved with, I have never seen a judge seal a document without being asked to do unless there was something in it, even in cases like this. It is a clear indication that the judge believes that the letter is, in some measure, the real thing."

Given these developments FTW feels compelled to show you the letter without further comment. While we are convinced that the factual material contained therein is correct, we remain unconvinced as to the letter's authorship. Given the judge's action in sealing it, the American people have a right - and an urgent need - to know.

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