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Gangster Planet: Where "Being Connected" Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

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The FAA listed it as the last registered American owner of “Cocaine One.” When questioned, however, Geffon would say nothing except to mention bankruptcy proceedings in Tampa involving Skyway Communications, whose principals were Brent and Glenn Kovar. In particular, he wouldn’t say why his own company, Royal Sons LLC, had given its address in an ad in Trade-A-Plane as the same Venice Airport hangar where Huffman Aviation had parked its planes five years earlier. Was that simply a typo? Or was there a more sinister connection? So, we asked around Venice Airport. No one there admitted to having heard of the company Royal Sons, nor did the names of its two principals – Frederic Geffon or Ron Gregory – ring any bells.

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Suddenly, the DC-9 drug bust became a big deal. It linked Royal Sons to the same company where Mohamed Atta practiced touch and go’s in July 2000, possibly at the same time DEA agents toting sub-machine guns were busting the Learjet belonging to Huffman Aviation flight school owner, Wallace J. Hilliard. Numerous local news clippings, some reprinted in Welcome to Terror-Land, proved that fact beyond a shadow of a doubt. Yet the record-breaking Orlando heroin bust in July 2000 was totally ignored in discussions of Hilliard’s flight school’s role in the 9/11 attack.

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Hubbard created the first version of Scientology in Arizona in 1952, revising it a few years later in California. Later he moved his headquarters offshore to a large yacht. Finding himself denied admission in one port after another, he established a new headquarters in 1975, having one in Clearwater, Fla., and another in southern California.⁴ Within a year his wife and ten associates were indicted in Washington, D.C. after one Scientologist was arrested with fake federal credentials in a government office building, and thousands of documents were seized in raids of Scientology offices.⁵ Two years before Hubbard died, a Los Angeles judge who tried a lawsuit against what he called the cult, said of Mr. Hubbard: “The evidence portrays a man who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements,” and who seemed gripped by “egoism, greed, avarice, lust for power, and vindictiveness and aggressiveness against persons perceived by him to be disloyal or hostile.”⁶ Sound like anyone else you know?

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It seemed almost too coincidental that Hubbard was living only a few miles from Glenn and Joy Kovar in the early '50s when they were students in Tempe, Arizona. Hubbard then relocated in 1956 to Pasadena just before they did. But coincidences do happen. Joy Kovar taught speed reading in Pasadena during the Cold War, holding classes at JPL. “Her early experience in personnel work was gained during 1957 to 1960 for the Department of Agriculture and later with the Air Force in 1963 and 1964. In 1960, Mrs. Kovar started Communication Skills Laboratory, in Pasadena, California, conducting classes for hundreds of businesspeople.”⁷

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The Kovars had met while each was a student at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona in the mid '50s, before relocating to Pasadena.⁸ Glenn was hired to set up the National Media Office, based out of the Washington, D.C. Office, but actually located in Pasadena. It was called the U.S. Forest Service Network Radio & Television studios, designed “to increase its visibility in the media. The most famous and lasting result of this initiative was the Lassie program. The famous collie and her forest ranger friends appeared every Sunday night on CBS for nearly a decade.”⁹

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He bragged to investors, sometimes in newsletters and brochures, that he had the interest of high-profile players like AOL-Time Warner, American Airlines, Bill Gates and Donald Trump. Kovar said he had met one-on-one with Tom Ridge, head of Homeland Security; gone to dinner with President Bush; and that Vice President Dick Cheney wanted to discuss “various homeland security initiatives.” Reported the July, 2007 Tampa Times, “Representatives for the three men say they’ve never heard of Kovar.”¹⁶ Brent Kovar had the spending habits of a confidence man. He spent elaborate amounts on his fleet of Humvees, all of which appeared to be impersonating vehicles from the Dept of Homeland Security, until the local police made them take the seals off.

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Both Barry Seal and Adnan Khashoggi, however, were “assets” of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). An asset, by definition, is a property a person or company owns. It has value. The CIA used its assets – I’m guessing it still does – to make money. With Seal, it made the money on the drugs he imported for them. With Khashoggi, it made money on financial fraud. As Republican Senator Everett Dirksen famously (and sonorously) intoned, “A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you’re talking real money.”²⁶

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Into the Florida swamp of corruption, California native Brent Kovar slithered, locating himself first in the area of Clearwater, where his father, Glenn, had been known to hang out years earlier. In fact, Glenn Kovar had literally been swept into a boat slip at 100 Pierce Condominiums in 1985 by Hurricane Alicia – a feat documented in the Tampa Times that October. This is, coincidentally, the same October 1985 that Adnan Khashoggi was facilitating a sale of TOW missiles to Iranians to free hostages in Lebanon. Small world.

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Brent Kovar was the President and CEO of a company called Skyway Communications, headquartered on a sprawling college campus in St. Petersburg, Florida, in a building recently vacated by a government-connected Israeli telecommunications company.

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That was in the spring of 2006, when it seems only the loyal fans of my website would learn of Brent Kovar's connection to the cocaine found in Mexico. I had my questions all ready to ask him: • What was Kovar's connection to Fred Geffon, head of Royal Sons, who had listed his address at Huffman Aviation in Venice? • Why did Texas Republican Tom DeLay give Brent an award "in recognition of his valuable contributions and dedication to the Republican Party"? Was he splitting his drug take with a political party? • But most important was why was his company's DC-9 carrying 5.5 tons of cocaine? Waiting

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A year later Bruce Tulio pleaded guilty to involvement in the manufacture of a major ingredient of methamphetamine.¹¹ The highlight event at every year's IPA Christmas Party was a speech by a famous U.S. politician – former President Gerald Ford, Bob Dole, and later both Bush President and both Clintons. What was that about? The company was also the scene of what a prosecuting attorney called "the most egregious case of sex harassment that Chicago has ever seen," a case in which 113 women employees were victimized.¹² IPA was where Douglas McClain would hook up with key associates with whom he collaborated during the next two decades in a "hyena pack" that went from one success to another in a series of lucrative financial scams.

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EBI Securities Corp. then bought a large percentage of Net Command Tech stock and sued Hamouth on behalf of Net Command shareholders. Czech Fund aka Czech Industries, Inc., which had been set up as a cover for Bud McFarlane to travel to eastern Europe in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, had links to Adnan Khashoggi and the Viennese bank, WMP. It was the remnants of this spooky company which bought the assets of Eastbrokers in Vienna and hired Wolfgang Kossner of Austria as a consultant.²² EBI also has links to Adnan Khashoggi and Ramy El-Batrawi through GenesisIntermedia, whose original underwriter was an outfit bearing the name Millennium Financial before it became I-Bankers Securities, a company where Michael Roy Fugler worked, as we're reminded by Christopher Byron's "Red Herring" essay, which we quote at length previously.²³ Byron also pointed out the connection between Millennium Financial and Netivation.com, which he said had "a curious history with an Arkansas politician named Asa Hutchinson." Netivation had two underwriters – Fugler's Millennium (I-Bankers) and EBI Securities (the former Cohig & Associates, Inc.).²⁴

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Need I remind you who Asa Hutchinson was? Before he became a failed candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination in 2024, Asa was the Governor of Arkansas from 2015 to 2023. A graduate of Bob Jones University, the craven Southern Baptist manqué Asa Hutchinson was the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas, where he specialized in looking the other way while Barry Seal was bringing cocaine back from Honduras in a CIA military cargo plane to Mena airport. It was only the biggest cocaine smuggling operation in recorded history, allowed to hum along right outside his office window. Terry Reed's first-person account of the operation, told by a friend of mine, John Cummings, pulled back the curtain to reveal how an undercover CIA operation worked in real time. In the pages of *Compromised: Clinton, Bush and the CIA*, the book they wrote together, Cummings clearly exposed how an elite Republican (George H. W. Bush) mentored an ambitious Democrat (Bill Clinton) in the dirty work of campaign finance à la drug money, provided by the CIA's most profitable sideline. Bush's friends in the operation included Oliver North, William P. Barr and U.S. Attorney at the time, Asa Hutchinson. As a reward for not prosecuting anyone involved in the Mena CIA-drug operation, Asa was named by George W. Bush as head of America's DEA, where he totally fit the necessary qualifications – lack of interest in stopping drug smugglers affiliated with the CIA.

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William Duncan's name had also appeared in the New York Times in 1989. When invited to testify by the House Judiciary subcommittee on crime, the IRS general counsel told him not to mention the name of a senior official who was suspected of laundering drug money. He resigned from his IRS job and testified truthfully. A Democratic chairman of another subcommittee he testified for blasted IRS officials, calling them "the wizards" in the "land of Oz." The Times, unfortunately, entirely omitted Hutchinson's name as well as the name of the IRS officials.²⁶ After more than 20 years, I'm left to wonder if it even matters. Hutchinson was one of only two candidates for the Republican nomination who said, if elected, he would not pardon Donald Trump for all of the 91 crimes he's been indicted for. He's almost become one of the few good guys. How

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One intrepid reporter named Michael Haddigan in a small town in Arkansas – after Barry Seal's old C-123 cargo plane he'd used to fly cocaine into Mena, crashed with Eugene Hasenfus and other CIA operatives aboard – was able to document that the "Fat Lady" had been "parked" at the airport in Mena for a year before the crash. His reporting is additional evidence that confirms Terry Reed's story.²⁷ Asa Hutchinson simply resigned as U.S. Attorney in November 1985, three months before Barry was gunned down, to run unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate. He had no Federal Government job again until 1997 when he was elected to the Congressional seat vacated by his brother, Tim Hutchinson. Just as Asa's term was ending, out of all the seasoned political direct-mail companies available, he hired a brand-new unknown dot-com – Netivation.com – to handle fund-raising for his re-election. Did he know something nobody else knew at the time? Netivation.com was intent on gaming

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Losada soon gets in touch with the new regime. He finds he can do a little business with Augusto Pinochet's niece, now in charge of mining. She happens to be married to the head of Chile's central bank, which no doubt corresponds with Nelson Rockefeller's family's banks in the U.S. – part of the New York Fed. Nelson Rockefeller, once in charge of the South American desk – it was called the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), before it was handed over to the newly minted CIA – had hopes in the early '70s of becoming President through a back door, as New York Times reporter Sam Roberts has reminded us.⁴ Later in this book, we will show how drug smuggler Kenneth Burnstine worked through a domestic corporation controlled by the Rockefeller family in the '60s and 70's, also working in Florida with a Rockefeller-connected building contractor, Ken Behring, who moved to the Pacific Northwest and bought a Seattle football team. Behring also owned one of our Skyway drug planes for a few years. It was all part of a RICO operation before there was a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. Nixon learned from Rockefeller how to replace the Europeans' "French Connection" with a similar one throughout South and Central America. The CIAA, created within Office for Emergency Management, was under direct control of the Office of the President from 1940 until 1945. After Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death, it was moved to State Department oversight – as the Office for Inter-American Affairs (OIAA) – then quickly abolished when the CIA was created.⁵ Rockefeller had an unofficial channel through which the movement of illegal drugs could be supervised under control of the covert section of the CIA.⁶ All Nixon had to do was to announce a "war on drugs," so the CIA could step in. In cases where the CIA was involved in the trafficking, the CIA could overrule the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which the Nixon Administration had set up a year or two before

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When Linda was following railroads back in the day, she already knew about the Bush family's connection to Brown Brothers Harriman and to G.H. Walker & Co. and to Walker's Thyssen connection through Harriman Fifteen. You can find it all now in Wikipedia. But she did not realize Walker had been heavily involved in railroad stock, which he'd handled for St. Louis millionaires. When his clients' investments were in danger of being lost in 1913, squat and pudgy Bert Walker – like Clark Kent entering a phone booth and emerging as Superman – stepped forward to rescue them from bankruptcy. He protected their investment in a railroad built from New Orleans through the southern tip of Texas to the Mexican border and preserved it for the future. In so doing, he negotiated a merger with the Missouri Pacific, which had a long-range plan to cross into Mexico.¹⁵ Prescott Bush was good at hooking up. He went to Yale and got tapped to Skull and Bones. Then he married the daughter of the man from St. Louis (G. H. "Bert" Walker), who had planned to move to New York in 1920 to handle investments for Morgan Guaranty Trust, but instead joined up with the two sons of the biggest railroad tycoon of all – old E.H. Harriman. Walker became a partner in W.A. Harriman & Co. in New York, buying an estate among super-wealthy capitalists at Wheatly Hills, Old Westbury, Long Island, NY – smack dab in the heart of horse breeders and bankers who had more money and power than God.¹⁶ In his spare time, Bert bred racehorses, served as head of the Jockey Club, and financed the upgrade of Madison Square Garden. Walker's firm, G.H. Walker & Co., invested \$60 million in the Brownsville Syndicate, along with his friends and associates in St. Louis, who had millions more in the rail network that bordered Mexico. When Bert died in 1953, his stock portfolio still included shares of the old St. Louis-based railroad syndicate, held in Missouri Pacific receivership until 1956. The syndicate had quietly been renamed Westag corporation. Bert's son, G. H. Walker, Jr. (G.H.W. Bush, "Poppy") called him "Uncle Herbie." Herbie was at that same time helping Poppy start his career in West Texas oil fields. That's when Herbie finds the yellowed stock certificates, which still had a few assets remaining – worth in the neighborhood of a cool million, in the '50s, when you could buy both a hot dog and a Pepsi for a nickel. Thanks to Uncle Herbie, credited in Bush's book, *Looking Forward*, this old stock became Poppy's basis in Zapata Petroleum, and later Zapata Offshore, in 1956.¹⁷ That's where our trail goes dead. All that's left are questions about what Uncle Herbie did with his daddy's stock portfolio after 1953. Like this big query: Did he start cooperating with the likes of the Hank family, who was accused of smuggling drugs?

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Kenny Rogers and his wife realized after two years of touring it was time to walk away, so they folded their cards. In April 1986, they transferred the jet to a corporation called Syntek, created in the late '70s by Gene E. Phillips in Greensboro, North Carolina.⁵ Phillips later bought Atlanta-based Southmark Properties, a real estate trust, and turned it into his holding company for Syntek, as well as a plethora of limited partnerships set up by his partner, William Friedman, a New York lawyer who specialized in tax shelters. The money came from junk bonds issued by Drexel, Burnham, Lambert – the flagship of Michael Milken. Syntek owned the jet but leased it back to Southmark, which used the leased jet as collateral for a new loan from The CIT Group in New York, paying off a \$4.3 million loan with California First Federal. The mid '80s were the vulture capital years – Milken's heyday. Even more importantly, Barry Seal was murdered, and then a short time later Iran-Contra exploded in the press.

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Wachovia Corporation, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, was a stone's throw from where Gene Phillips created Syntek with help from a North Carolina bank then in the planning stage to expand before being consumed by bigger banks in New York or San Francisco. NationsBank in Charlotte had merged with C&S/Sovran Corporation of Atlanta, the company that sold Southmark to Gene Phillips.⁶ North Carolina bankers in the early '90s had already decided to become New York's primary financial rival for international customers. Then they made the dream happen. Almost like magic. It all started happening right after Bill Clinton's inauguration in January 1993. The city of Charlotte, North Carolina proudly announced a merger allowing it to "leapfrog over San Francisco" and become "the No. 2 U.S. banking center."⁷ In that deal, First Union Bank paid \$5.4 billion to acquire First Fidelity Bancorporation, New Jersey's largest bank.⁸ Not far from Donald Trump's Atlantic City empire of casinos, First Fidelity held mortgages on those properties. In Pamela L. Moore's article in the Charlotte Observer, she wrote that First Union bankers began "holing up" in a classy hotel in October 1993 for two full days a month, making plans to change the face of the southern bank into an investment bank rivaling Wall Street's biggest banks in the New York Fed. The first step was to create First Union Capital Markets Group in January 1994.⁹ Almost at the same time Charlotte's largest bank, NationsBank, began to plan for a future merger with San Francisco-based Bank of America in October 1998.¹⁰ Deposits also began pouring in through Mexico's casa de cambios to Wachovia Corporation in Winston-Salem – one of the cities making up North Carolina's so-called 'Triad'. Then on September 4, 2001, Wachovia merged into First Union of Charlotte, but maintained the wealth-management sector, as well as the Carolinas-region headquarters in Winston-Salem.¹¹ It was all very complicated. That's why they almost got away with it.

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Along the way, Ling's business partner had been a man we've all heard of – D. Harold Byrd – one-time Mr. Big in both the Dallas branch and the national Civil Air Patrol (CAP).²⁰ CAP was where both Barry Seal and Lee Harvey Oswald learned to fly, with help from CAP pilot David Ferrie. I wrote about this years ago at my website²¹ and in Barry and 'the boys.'²² Under a headline reading "Air Force Keeps Range In Venice," the Sarasota Herald Tribune on Dec 4, 1959, reported, "As the result of talks between the Air Force and Chance-Vought Aviation of Dallas the missile firing range at the Venice Airport may be given semi-permanent status." Similar information was published that year in St. Petersburg: "Regulus Missile Fired at Venice."²³ Several weeks later, under snapshots of CAP student pilots being trained by the National Guard, appeared possibly the most hyberbolic headline ever for a dateline Venice story: "1959 Has Been the Best Year for Venice Since City's Birth." The body of the article announced that the city had "received national publicity as the site of the launchings of the Regulus II guided missiles or drone target planes manufactured by the Chance-Vought Aircraft Corp. which has set up installations on the Venice Airport."²⁴ Just like Brent Kovar, Jimmy Ling had earlier been called a wizard in electronics. He did not finish high school, let alone college – getting his knowledge from working in his father's shop and that of Oscar Emerson in Dallas before World War II. He returned from the Navy in 1947 with big ideas and some important military contacts, including D. Harold Byrd, whose marriage in 1935 to Mattie Caruth, the daughter of one of Dallas' wealthiest and most prominent families, added to his power as the head of the Civil Air Patrol in Texas and nation-wide.

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In 2008, George Walker Bush bought two tracts that adjoined the east property line of the Gaywood mansion, where Gene Phillips continued to live until his death in 2019.³⁶ The backyards of the two houses would have made it convenient for the occupants to get together without being seen by public spectators. Oh, to be a fly at their backyard picnics!

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That's when money-laundering began to be America's leading industry. Earlier we quoted from Pamela Moore's feature story about Gene Phillips. Notable is the fact that he created Syntek from a Greensboro, N.C., lumber company that he owed \$150,000. Yet he managed to buy out his employer in a leveraged buyout and moved his new company, renamed Syntek, to Dallas.³⁸ Phillips' "next target was Atlanta-based Southmark Properties, a real estate investment trust with \$90 million in assets, spawned by Citizens & Southern National Bank. He and his former lawyer, Bill Friedman, waged a successful takeover," Moore wrote: "From there, they bought and sold undervalued properties, spinning them off into hundreds of limited partnerships. Along the way, they purchased Houston's San Jacinto Savings Association, which was nearly insolvent, and began dealing with the granddaddy of the junk bond market: Drexel Burnham Lambert."

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Stewart's grandfather had worked for several banks in Dallas before retiring as chairman of the First National Bank in Dallas, which would merge in 1972 with the Citizens Bank and Trust of Houston to form First International Bancshares.⁴² For decades they were the bankers for the Hunt family. They hired George H. W. Bush, known by his family as "Poppy," when he got a pink slip from Jimmy Carter. It's easy to be optimistic when the next U.S. President used to be your employee, I suppose.

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Mohammad bin Laden was a bricklayer for Aramco in 1931, when he founded what was to become the Binladen Group.¹ After his death in a helicopter crash in 1968, his son Salem was named his successor. The Binladin Group owners were also trained and educated in Western cities in the United States and Europe.² Mohammad had numerous wives and concubines and hundreds of children. When he died in 1967, he was succeeded by his son Salem, who had friends in Texas.³ On May 29, 1988, Salem was checking out an Ultralight plane to buy from a seller near New Braunfels, Texas, a short hop from San Antonio, when he made a mid-air turn into power lines and was killed instantly.⁴ Another brother named Bakr was named to succeed Salem. Bakr had a degree in civil engineering from the University of Miami and also owned a large estate west of Orlando, purchased in 1980.⁵ So the bin Laden brothers had lots of ties to Texas and Florida. They also had a half-brother named Osama, who got an engineering degree in 1979, but did not join the family firm. Instead, he joined the mujahadeen in Afghanistan which was invaded by the USSR that same year. This is where stories begin to diverge. The official version is that, when Bakr

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The Taliban has not just once, but twice eradicated. Afghanistan's poppy cultivation, at times the world's largest source of heroin. Despite western accusations, it has never been the Taliban behind the Afghan drug industry, but only ever the US and its allies, with billions in profits breezily laundered through the global financial system."⁶

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We have to go back to the days of LBJ and Nixon to find the beginnings of Saudi influence in the United States. To Adnan Khashoggi, who was the first Saudi to work openly with the CIA. The best introduction to Adnan, in my opinion, was written by his son-in-law spy, Larry J. Kolb, recruited and trained by Miles Copeland. Kolb was cleared to write about some of his experiences working for the CIA in connection with Adnan Khashoggi in a book called Overworld:

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Adnan left Chico State without completing his degree and moved to London, where in 1960 he met a British girl, born to an unmarried working-class mother. At the time Sandra Patricia Jarvis Daly was 19, introduced to Adnan by his “cousin,” whom author Ronald Kessler left unnamed in his 1986 book.¹⁵ They married in late April 1961, when the Earth seemed like a different planet than today’s. We’re pretty sure Adnan Khashoggi and his associates over the years were responsible in a major way for those changes. Living in Riyadh and Beirut, the short, dark – I hesitate to add “handsome” – Saudi was undoubtedly working with the CIA’s Arabists stationed in Lebanon. Kermit “Kim” Roosevelt (grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt) and his sidekick Miles Copeland had known each other since their days in the OSS in the Middle East Branch during and shortly after World War II. What really changed the world was when the Arabists got together with former OSS officers stationed in China in the area around Kunming. The baby girl was given up for adoption in Leicestershire, England, where Sandra lived. Years after being adopted, Kim Patrick was discovered by a private detective (hired by Soraya) in South Africa, living with the couple who’d adopted her. They had moved when she was nine. Kim was 14 when Soraya first met her in London, according to Kolb. That would have been around 1973, some months after Adnan divorced Soraya after hearing from MI-5 that she was having an affair with President Gaafar Nimeri of the Sudan.

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From Kolb we also learn that Sandra had been friendly with Khashoggi’s favorite sister, Samira, who was married to Mohamed al-Fayed. Dodi, their son, was a first cousin of the Khashoggi children. Dodi was killed in a car crash with Princess Diana at the Pont de l’Alma tunnel in Paris in August 1997. Some said MI6 staged the crash to prevent Diana from marrying Dodi. By 1970 Adnan’s commissions from Lockheed totaled \$106 million, but he was still seeking to expand sales. An introduction to Northrup came by way of Kermit “Kim” Roosevelt. Kim had retired from the CIA’s Middle East division in 1955. He then moved into what he called the “private sector,” by becoming the first “director of government affairs for Gulf Oil.” The title alone connotes “being connected.” His business was a consulting and lobbying operation that specialized in hooking up U.S. firms which did business in the Middle East with foreign governments seeking to buy. According to his obituary in the Washington

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Fifteen months after LTV was created, the Secretary of Defense chose General Dynamics over Boeing. “General Dynamics planned to build the aircraft at its Convair plant in Fort Worth, Texas.”²³ Chance-Vought was operating out of the Convair plant at the same time it had installed Regulus II missiles at Venice Airport in 1959. The same missiles brought down by Boeing’s drones in the testing. One would have thought the winner of that test would get the contract. But no. Tempers flared. Complaints were immediate, followed by a Senate investigation. At stake: “production orders were estimated eventually to be worth more than \$6.5 billion and involve 20,000 jobs and 1,700 planes—the largest tactical airplane contract since World War II.”²⁴ It was huge. All eyes then turned to Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth, a Texan.²⁵ Did he have an insider interest? Wasn’t he a friend of LBJ and the Vice President’s other Texas friends?²⁶

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Back in 1956 both LBJ and his Dallas friend and donor, D. H. Byrd, an enthusiastic safari and game hunter, had become members of the Mt. Kenya Safari Club. We called on a source, now retired and possibly deceased, who had worked in the American aerospace industry, building satellites for NSA for several decades. He might have known General Harry Byrd, we figured. He had ... in fact, he had worked at LTV. And in between anecdotes that are colorful, but neither here nor there, he mentioned that, oh, by the bye, did we know that ... When Byrd’s defense aerospace firm LTV “went big” after the JFK assassination, he told us, it had become a big part of an overarching Air Force Operation... For years afterward, he said, every self-respecting big-time Air Force defense program – everyone who was anyone, in other words – came under the overall rubric of an Air Force Operation whose declassified codename – he paused here, for dramatic effect... It was called Operation Big Safari.

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CIA files on Moss indicated his role in his government jobs had been as liaison between the Mafia and government contracting, as a means of laundering dirty profits into legitimate business. His business office at 1025 Connecticut NW in Washington, D.C. was actually run as a secretarial service by his girlfriend, Julia Cellini, whose brothers ran casinos at various times in Cuba, Miami and the Bahamas. It may not have been the same office, but it would have been walking distance from the office of B. R. Fox Electronics – aka Bernie Spindel – who planted bugs for Mafia dons and Teamsters presidents. And others. Anyone who would pay. Moss had long been a member of the African Safari Club originally set up in 1959 by actor William Holden, former Indiana oilman Raymond John Ryan, who built up Palm Springs out of nothing, and banker Carl (or Karl) Hirschmann of Switzerland. Senator Lyndon Johnson was a founding member of the Mt. Kenya club, along with Sir Winston Churchill and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.²⁸ Rich American, British and Dutch adventurers who frequented the Mt. Kenya Safari Club – all were white, of course – and viewed Adnan Khashoggi as they would a trusted concierge. Moss recommended him as the “white knight” to rescue the owners from their varied financial problems. Perhaps the members just assumed they could use his money to vamp up their club to accomplish their own ends without losing their place in the world order. After all, he wouldn’t have become so rich without the commissions made from selling their weapons. In 1970 Mt. Kenya’s management was

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His numerous companies under the Triad umbrella, headquartered in Utah, hired a public relations consultant in 1976 – the same Edward K. Moss who brokered the deal at Mt. Kenya. Moss was pictured in newspapers, a rare event for him, in September 1978. As chairman of the private group, Moss was quoted saying, “We think our Mount Kenya Safari Club is the jewel in the crown of Kenya’s tourism.”³¹ Moss, a Pennsylvanian educated at Culver Military, Yale, and George Washington University, had been in public relations work since FDR’s administration in 1940 until 1952. When Eisenhower took office, Moss started his own firm, which, in 1960, merged with Howard Chase Associates, a similar firm with ties to Republicans. Edward K. Moss had been cleared by the CIA for public relations uses in 1959 and 1962 under Project ZRMAJOR – a CIA program that “exploited” the use of political consultants by covert action staff, according to a report in 1967 issued by the CIA’s inspector general.

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The transfer of the Mt. Kenya Safari Club to Saudi ownership occurred just as American politicians and bankers were hoping for infusions of money from Arab oil just as the Saudis were buying back their Aramco shares. That could only double the value of petrodollars flowing into the Saudi economy. Our leaders were jealous, envious. It didn’t seem fair that non-white desert rats could be so rich while the U. S. was drowning in debt.

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The last thing Richard Nixon accomplished before allowing George Bush to talk him into resigning was to get the Saudi king to sign a document agreeing to bail out the U.S. Fed. Nixon met the Saudi King in June 1974 and concluded a verbal agreement. He then sent William E. Simon, his “energy czar,” – before rising to that glorified title, had been a mere broker in U.S. Treasury securities for Salomon Brothers – to work out the details in Saudi Arabia. Simon had, therefore, been at the right place at the right time to replace John Connally when he got himself indicted in the milk fund scandal. According to Bloomberg, the basic framework of the agreement was simple. The U.S. would buy Saudi Arabia’s oil and also provide the Saudis with military aid and equipment. “In return, the Saudis would plow billions of their petrodollar revenue back into Treasuries and finance America’s spending.”³² Elsewhere in this book you’ll hear mention of the secret “28 pages.” This agreement was what that term refers to. It was Gerald Parsky who hashed out the final the terms of the two leaders’ verbal agreement.³³ The one real sticking point was this: “King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud demanded the country’s Treasury purchases stay ‘strictly secret,’ according to a diplomatic cable obtained by Bloomberg from the National Archives database.”³⁴ Saudis

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These disclosures came amid lawsuits filed by victims of 9/11 and their families and numerous FOIA requests in the last months of Obama’s second term. Threats came from Saudi Arabia in April 2016, warning “it would start selling as much as \$750 billion in Treasuries and other assets if Congress passes a bill allowing the kingdom to be held liable in U.S. courts for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to the New York Times.” The threats meant little, as there was “a renewed push by presidential candidates and legislators from both the Democratic and Republican parties to declassify a 28-page section of a 2004 U.S. government report that is believed to detail possible Saudi connections to the attacks,” Bloomberg said.³⁵ In May 2004 I’d made my first reference to 28 pages of the Intelligence Committee Report that would have told the American people about the foreign government sponsorship of the terrorists, which President George W. Bush had classified, saying, “It would reveal sources and methods.” What it would have revealed more than anything was that the U.S. Government and the Federal Reserve were owned by Saudi Arabia, and the only people who had known about the secret deal made in 1974 were Republicans, who would continue making secret deals with Saudis for many years to come – just to get elected, or re-elected.

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That secret deal, made just before Nixon boarded his helicopter and rode off into the sunset in 1974, was part of the reason Adnan Khashoggi agreed to buy the Safari Club in Kenya two or three years later. The Saudis weren't satisfied just owning the U.S. Fed. They had international interests. One of the first groups to meet at Khashoggi's new African digs in September 1976 was "a coalition of nations including Morocco, Egypt and France – that ran covert operations around Africa at a time when Congress had clipped the C.I.A.'s wings over years of abuses."³⁶ The funding provided by this "international club," who also called themselves the "Safari Club," was meant to be secret, so the CIA had to develop a cover story to hide the source of funds being poured into the White House sponsored activities of Col. Oliver North and his cronies. Mazzetti and Apuzzo explained that:

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The CIA chose a bevy of retired generals and colonels to run cover to hide the billions of dollars flowing from the Saudis into the Swiss bank accounts. Major General John K. "Jack" Singlaub, who had served in the OSS in China with many of military and intelligence officials mentioned in other pages of this book, was tapped to be in charge of raising funds. Singlaub saw his commander in chief, President Jimmy Carter, much the same way that military brass of the '60s saw JFK. When Singlaub told a reporter that President Jimmy Carter's "pledge to withdraw ground troops from South Korea was a mistake that would lead to war," he found himself summoned back to Washington to a meeting with the President. ³⁸ Carter removed Singlaub from the No. 3 military post in Korea. He was being transferred to a new position at an equivalent degree of responsibility and stature," the President said.³⁹ Singlaub retired instead and began speaking across the country, repeating his criticisms wherever he was invited to give a speech. As the new U.S. head of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), he established a non-profit corporation in Arizona in 1981 – U.S. Council for World Freedom (USCWF) – granted tax-exempt status by the IRS so all donations would be tax deductible, and Singlaub was named president.

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“Jet Company Allegedly Risked Celebrity Passengers’ Lives for Cheap Fuel,” an ABC headline read, after the indictment was unsealed.¹² New York’s NBC 4 chief investigative reporter described Platinum Jet’s luxury charter service as one which “catered to celebrities and ex-Presidents from Beyonce to Bill Clinton. “Marquee names had dotted its passenger lists, sources said, including former president George H.W. Bush, basketball great Shaquille O’Neal, Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana, rappers Jay Z, Sean “Diddy” Combs, and Snoop Dogg, actor Burt Reynolds, and movie producer Harvey Weinstein,” who later lost his celebrity status.¹³ He replaced it with the title of rapist and convicted felon. None of the mainstream news members asked what had given Platinum its apparent clout.¹⁴ Endangering the lives of celebrities is no more serious a crime than endangering the lives of those unfortunates without prospect of fame. But well-known names did ensure Brassington’s case got a lot of publicity. An additional two years passed, however, before Brassington marched off to prison. Once we had Mike Brassington firmly in our sights, it wasn’t hard to backtrack his activities during the decade after the 9/11 attack. In 2004 another private jet operated by Platinum out of Fort Lauderdale, for example, had run a jet off a runway at Peachtree-DeKalb Airport in Atlanta.¹⁵

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As fascinating as the 2005 crash at Teterboro was, it had only become significant upon learning Brassington had been working for Misick at this crucial point in time. Had I known about Michael Brassington’s job as First Pilot in real time, keeping track of him would have involved nothing more strenuous than turning on “Entertainment Tonight”. Premier Mike’s corruption grew so egregious – even by the Caribbean’s less-than-rigid standards – that Great Britain was forced to man up and bite the bullet. The headline in the Guardian read: “UK Seizes Control of Turks and Caicos over Sleaze Allegations.”²⁷ Her Majesty’s government suffered a lot of bad publicity. Bad mojo was all around. Mike Misick will be remembered as a man so corrupt that Great Britain resurrected the British Empire for a day. They took back a former colony – for the only time in history – that had already been granted independence. Next, the British Government ordered a Commission of Inquiry into the breakdown of law and order in the Turks & Caicos, and the judges invited Ms McCoy to testify. She did.

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The Turks & Caicos corruption inquiry was avidly followed by Caribbean newspapers, which reported details of venality and greed on such a massive scale that it appeared the Inquiry had been convened just in time to stop the plunderers from carting off all the sand. Sir Robin: Is that right, that what the Premier said to you constantly was, “We ain’t broke” and that was about it? A: He said, “We ain’t broke, we rich.” That was, you know, was our little slogan around the house. Sir Robin moved on to ask about what he was most interested in – a shady bank in the Czech Republic that was claiming to hold the paper on a loan the bank made to the couple. The bank, we were later to learn, did not only have links to Mario Hoffmann, but also to Adnan Khashoggi, as we’ll see in a later chapter. The loan itself named both Michael E. Misick and LisaRaye McCoy Misick. But she couldn’t recall it without prompting.

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A year or two before Wally Hilliard’s death, I’d received an email from a former associate, Lois Battuello, whom I mentioned in my second book, *Welcome to TerrorLand*, possibly without naming her. Because of her work with intelligence agencies, she didn’t like her name freely scattered around. Lois lived in California wine country, which has been the scene of substantial covert CIA activity for decades, and her family’s winery had in fact been frequented by Kermit “Kim” Roosevelt and “the boys” of his day. During the 1960s, Kim Roosevelt, with his partner Miles Copeland, had mentored Adnan Khashoggi in his work for “the Company,” possibly even assisting him in acquiring a controlling interest in one or more banks later rolled into California Bank, later United California Bank (UCB) and ultimately part of First Interstate bank conglomerate.⁵ Lois had a master’s degree in finance from Stanford and “had cut her teeth at the United California Bank (UCB), right after former CIA director John McCone served as chairman,” Sander Hicks wrote.⁶ Lois and her brother, as I recall, were fighting over her family’s vineyard, which Kim Roosevelt liked to frequent, when she ran up against heavy-handed tactics used by Kim’s ‘boys’. I could be wrong. That was at least 25 years ago. Time moves in one direction, memory in another, as they say.

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LBJ's former best bud John Connally, who campaigned for Nixon in 1968 and became his Secretary of the Treasury, was indicted on August 1, 1974, in the Milk Fund Bribery Scandal. President Nixon had just signed a secret arrangement with Saudi Arabia (later known as the "28 Pages"), followed by Nixon's resignation a few days later on August 9th.. Gerald Ford ascended to power and named George H. W. Bush as Director of the CIA. The question then becomes who may have planted a bug in Allbritton's ear to buy Riggs Bank, which held deposits for not only many Congressmen and Senators, but for foreign ambassadors posted in the U.S. Capitol. There are a whole host of possibilities from both parties. Riggs was investigated for not filing suspicious activity reports (SARs), as expanded by the Patriot Act, for Prince Bandar of the Saudi Embassy. The Joint House and Senate Committee on 9/11 had just published in December 2002 its report with 28 pages redacted. The FBI cleared Prince Bandar, but in the process also learned of long-held accounts at the bank by Augusto Pinochet of Chile since he overthrew Allende in 1973.¹⁴ The Washington Post reported that the "FBI, bank regulators and three congressional committees continue to delve into Riggs's international banking relationships, particularly its two-decade role as chief banker for the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington. "Investigators

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Another coincidence – what I like to call a CIA tell – is this: the man who presented him with his big check in 1982 was Myron DuBain, whose life-long ties to the CIA included two stints at the helm of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Palo Alto, California. You know, the outfit where "remote viewing" experiments were paid for by CIA grant monies. DuBain became chairman of SRI International in 1985, at a crucial time when the U.S. Defense Dept. was growing increasingly concerned with advances in psychic research behind what was then called the "Iron Curtain." That made him, in my mind, "the man who paid 'the Men Who Stare at Goats'," the title of a 2009 George Clooney film.²⁶ A January 10, 1984, headline in the New York Times read "Pentagon Is Said To Focus On ESP For Wartime Use."²⁷

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DuBain was also president of SRI during the late 60's, and it was shortly afterward that the CIA began funding parapsychological experiments at SRI "by Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff, once with the NSA and at the time a Scientologist," continued the Times story.

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His time at SRI must have been appreciated, or perhaps there were other reasons he was in business in the exclusive Villa Taverna private club in San Francisco with Gordon Getty – son of uber-wealthy oilman J. Paul Getty – and former Reagan Secretary of State George Schultz. ²⁸ All this takes us to the reason for the quote at the beginning of the chapter by Sandy Weill.

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In 1984 Weill was elected chairman and CEO of American Express's insurance subsidiary, Fireman's Fund Insurance Company (DuBain's firm). So, Wally Hilliard's Wisconsin subsidiary fell under Weill's control. While at American Express, Weill began grooming as a protégé, Jamie Dimon, the future CEO of JPMorgan Chase. Don't worry. We're not giving a test later. Believe it or not, however, some readers thrive on details like this. Just one year after arriving in Naples, Florida, Hilliard found it necessary to purchase – not just the three flight schools – but a start-up airline, FLAIR, as well. What was up with that? My parents retired to Florida in 1981. I remember one of my dad's first moves being the purchase of a new pastel golf wardrobe. I recall canary-yellow slacks, a wide white belt, and white golf shoes. He and my mom started playing doubles tennis.

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The Orlando Sentinel quoted an official who called the heroin bust “the largest find of its kind in the southeastern United States in recent years.”³² In Florida, every new bust seems to break all past records. Only two categories of aviation “observers” would speak freely with me. Former business partners screwed on a deal, and bitter ex-wives and girlfriends. John Villada was in “Group A.” The FBI had been following him, Villada explained. He'd been shown photographs of himself and his family around Naples Airport. Rudi Dekkers, Hilliard's chief minion at the time, had forged his (Villada's) signature on aircraft repair orders. “Rudi used my name illegally on a helicopter, telling the FAA the required repair work on the helicopter had been completed. Meaning if anything went wrong with the aircraft, it would be ‘on’ me.” He was legally compelled to report the violation to the FAA, Villada said, “After I reported Rudi for violations, an FAA guy came out. He sat me down and said: “I suggest you back out of this.” “I couldn't believe it.” He shakes his head in disbelief. “I called the FAA to report a violation and was warned to leave him alone.” John Villada was the kind of guy to respond to an insult by going out of his way to speak with a reporter. Me. He said, “I know more about Wally Hilliard than I ever want to know. Why do you think the U.S. military didn't close the passes into Pakistan during the Tora Bora bombing? This all goes far deeper than you think.”³²

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After the 1996 divorce, Barbara Burchill married again – this time a Russian named Michael Bondarenko, who had arrived as an infant from Bremerhaven, Germany on USS General Langfitt, a refugee ship bringing displaced persons to the U.S.¹³ On that voyage, Michael and his father were listed as Russian, while his mother and older half-sister were born in Germany. The family's sponsor was the Tolstoy Foundation, which paid for their travel from Bremerhaven.¹⁴ The Tolstoy Foundation was described in Warren Commission hearings into the Kennedy Assassination as an anti-Communist organization which collected vast amounts of information on all persons it sponsored. We searched for the name "Tolstoy" within a 490-page file from the Warren Commission and found testimony from Paul Raigorodsky, which gave a very long-winded discussion about how displaced Russians were watched by the churches they joined.¹⁵ Richard Bartholomew's excellent work – "Possible Discovery of an Automobile Used in the JFK Conspiracy" – also documents the Russian emigres involved with the "CIA-funded St. Nicholas Parish" they founded.¹⁶ St Nicholas Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, located just outside the Tolstoy Farm in New Jersey, was three miles away from where the Bondarenko family had settled, and only five miles from where Michael attended high school at Montclair in 1972. Peter Levenda has also written about his experience with this church in his series Sinister Forces, published by TrineDay.¹⁷

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Other recent research directly connects the Tolstoy Foundation to the Nazi network of Otto Skorzeny: Here we find a decisive link to the Skorzeny network. In his capacity as member of the Tolstoy Foundation Board of Directors, Paul Raigorodsky would have worked directly with Colonel Herschel V. Williams, also a member of the board. Colonel Williams was the USAF intelligence officer and boss of Ilse Skorzeny's in the international division of Previews, Inc. in New York. He was in daily contact with Ilse and corresponded with Otto frequently. This is strong evidence that Colonel Williams was "in the know" concerning operations in Dallas. Also, Previews Inc. had an active office in Dallas at the time. The document that confirms beyond any doubt that Colonel Williams worked with Raigorodsky is found in the Appendix. Colonel Williams' name is second from the bottom on the list. The document is dated November 16, 1962. "In the brief review of the testimony before the Warren Commission by Raigorodsky, we found the name of his close friend and associate Dallas oil executive Jake Hamon ... who plays prominently in the background of George de Mohrenschildt, Paul Raigorodsky and the Skorzeny network as a whole.... [I]t was Jake Hamon who recommended de Mohrenschildt for his position with the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) working in Yugoslavia in 1957. The ICA was already established in an earlier chapter as a cover organization for the CIA with imbedded Agency officers. Otto Skorzeny also worked with the ICA and is heavily documented in the Skorzeny papers for the period covering the 1950s.¹⁸ We only quote a small part of this book, which we highly recommend. As a followup, we suggest you also read the 2021 book, Coup in Dallas, by H. P. Albarelli Jr., and Leslie Sharp.¹⁹ The Jake Hamon mentioned above was actually Jake Hamon, Jr., whose father, because of his ties to circus owner John Ringling of Sarasota, appears in another chapter of our book. Small world.

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Ricky and Buckets then had enough money to party with her friend Joanne, whose second husband was possibly Houston's richest oil and gas tycoon, Robert R. Herring, chairman of Houston Natural Gas – later Enron.³² It's the same Enron that collapsed overnight a few days before 9/11 – August 2001 – to be more exact. Bob Herring got filthy rich by “doin’ bidnes” – as Texans say – with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries back in the ‘60s. He even took Joanne with him while he was negotiating with all the sheiks in Middle Eastern nations. This was years before President Nixon, on his way out the back door of the White House in 1974, signed a secret deal with Saudi King Faisal. ³³ Joanne King, then a brunette, had her own daytime talk show that aired on Houston's KHOU-TV and later KPRC-TV, which lasted twelve years.³⁴ Joanne's connections and popularity paid off well for Robert Herring, who ferried his charismatic wife all over the world. She also became a fixture in Washington, D.C. society circles long before James A. Baker III was named President Reagan's chief of staff in 1981. The New York Times featured Joanne in a 1983 article which described a White House dinner she'd planned for 110 guests. All were amazed, but Baker just smiled, as he explained: “Joanne and I went to kindergarten together. We've known each other all our lives. She's a bright, imaginative, wonderful girl.”³⁵ The Times elaborated, “Joanne is Joanne King Herring, one of Houston's seemingly endless supply of beautiful blonde heiresses, the honorary consul general of Morocco and Pakistan and a habitual visitor in the courts of the Middle East. “Her friend Prince Bandar bin Sultan is Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States. She wanted him to meet the right people. So, she borrowed the vast mezzanine of the Hay-Adams Hotel last week and threw him the sort of extravaganza most Americans know, if they know at all, only from fiction, the movies and television.”

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When she used the word “they,” Joanne apparently meant Boris Karloff look-alike General Zia-Ul-Haq, Army Chief of Pakistan, whom one blogger calls the “Father of Taliban terrorism in Pakistan and Father of Drug smuggling Heroin and also Islamic Extremism and Terrorism known as Talibanisation and Saudisation and Wahabization of Pakistan.”³⁸ Phew, the blogger was as long-winded as Joanne herself. Long story short. Joanne got the title of honorary consul because hubby was too busy. And she milked it to the hilt. “I was appointed under Bhutto,” she continues. “But you see, he was the one cog in the way of the Russians. And if we had not had total cooperation from Zia, we couldn't have gotten anything [meaning weapons systems] into Afghanistan. And he risked everything to help us do that. And we know that he was killed by the Russians.³⁹ By “we,” she may have meant herself and Charlie, since investigations into the August 17, 1988, explosion of the C-130 plane, carrying Zia, two Americans, and an entourage of 27 Pakistani advisers, came up empty. Thirty years later, it's still murky, and “Gen Zia's death remains shrouded in mystery.”⁴⁰

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Adnan Khashoggi had been making his rounds in Houston society as early as 1969, mentioned alongside Joanne herself, who'd just gone blonde. Unfortunately, his name was misspelled. Adnan appeared with Count Pierre de Mallarey in Houston in 1969, years before the Count bought a run-down White House replica – truly a “white elephant” – built by former Governor Ross Sterling on Galveston Bay some 30 miles east of Houston.⁴¹ By 2012, however, the Count was busily assisting Princess Gloria and her husband Johannes, heir to the fortune of the Thurn und Taxis family, in curating their voluminous art treasures that dated back a minimum of two centuries.⁴²

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The conduit for the money was Universal Trading Corporation, originally set up in 1938 to receive monies and credit from a loan processed between the RFC (Reconstruction Finance Corporation) and Soong's bank. It had been repaid by exports of metals from China to the U.S. Like Intercontinent Aviation, its headquarters was 30 Rockefeller Center. The president of Universal Trading was Archie Lochhead, the first head of the U.S. Exchange Stabilization Fund. Chennault's partner Whiting Willauer was secretary.³²

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By the time the terms of the contract were finalized, CAMCO had moved its plant from Yunnan to Rangoon in Burma. On April 15, 1941, Roosevelt signed a “secret, unlisted executive order” authorizing a private corporation holding a contract with a foreign government to hire U.S. military officers.³³ The contract was between the Chinese and CAMCO, and the officers they hired became the American Volunteer Group (AVG), better known as the Flying Tigers. Whatever the source of the symbol – perhaps a Chinese proverb about “giving wings to the tiger” has been suggested – Disney Studio in Hollywood designed a logo of a winged Bengal tiger with outstretched claws which got promoted in Time magazine three weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack. That was when the United States went to war for real against Japan. After that there was no further need to worry about violating the Neutrality Act.

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The CIA officially took over the airline as a proprietary in a document signed November 1, 1949, agreeing to pay \$1,200,000 each year to maintain it. Thomas G. “Tommy the Cork” Corcoran, who had been involved in all sorts of legal sleight-of-hand since Franklin Roosevelt's first days in office, now got help in doing the legal work from Paul Helliwell, a Florida lawyer then in the OSS.³⁵ The Miami lawyer would later go on to set up Southern Air Transport (SAT) and Air Asia as CIA proprietaries.

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When the Marana base was privatized in 1975, around the same time President Gerald Ford began building his retirement home in the same general area, top CIA aviation officers, including the Agency's legendary George A. Doole, Jr., "retired" and went to work there for the now-private Evergreen International – the company resulting from the merger of Evergreen Helicopters and Intermountain Aviation. The CIA's far-flung aviation operations, which span the globe, would continue to be run from there. Thousands of airplanes sitting parked, waiting to be reactivated. Inside the largest hanger hangs a plaque dedicated to Doole, who died in 1985. The subsequent privatization of government assets into private hands had the same result as it did when Russia began to privatize 15 years later. The aviation wing of American crony capitalism was born. Soon retired Generals, like Richard Secord and John Singlaub, became instant corporate CEO's, running aircraft charter and aviation companies that continued doing the CIA's bidding. Who's been doing their bidding ever since? Suffice it to say it's a bit murky at this time. As you read this, my work is done. I have, as Shakespeare said, "shuffled off this mortal coil." The next generation must pick up where the boomers leave off. All I have to leave you with is a clue. Reread the excerpt at the beginning of this chapter. Then start digging.

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"What is there that suggests U.S. covert intelligence involvement in AGAPE Flights?" I had to ask myself. Absent a CIA parking pass on the dashboard of one of the SUV's in AGAPE's parking lot, a web of connections offered clues that

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AGAPE may be serving agendas other than that of the Almighty: First, the group had links to the controversial Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), accused in the Latin American press of being funded by American intelligence to export a virulent brand of Christian fundamentalism to undermine the social cohesion of aboriginal communities and eliminate obstacles to natural resource exploitation. The SIL was also covered voluminously in a 1995 Gerard Colby book about Nelson Rockefeller's role in intelligence in South America – *Thy Will Be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil*.²⁴ Rockefeller was appointed in 1940 to a position called Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (sort of like a CIA just for South and Central America) that lasted until President Truman abolished the agency at the close of the war.

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AGAPE was also suspected of involvement in the aforementioned CIA-backed coup in Haiti. Also, the U. S. Treasury Dept. gave its permission for AGAPE to fly regularly to Cuba. Oddly enough, we discovered Mohamed Atta's flight instructor at Huffman Aviation, Mark Mikarts, was a volunteer pilot for AGAPE. Even odder, Mikarts had previously gone by the surname of Wierdak.²⁵ Spies often use aliases, don't they? That's not to say Mikarts was one. He was still hanging out in Sarasota when the Port Charlotte Sun found him after he crash-landed a single-engine plane near North Port in 2015, working as a flight instructor for Arne Kruithof. Only the reporter, no doubt a newbie, misspelled Arne's name as Kauithof.

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High praise was bestowed on Nolen's work in a 1922 editorial in the St. Petersburg (now Tampa Bay) Times, owned at the time by Paul Poynter, a friend and colleague of Sarasota's own David Breed Lindsay, Sr. and his father George D. Lindsay.⁹ Before meeting up in Tampa, they'd lived thirty miles apart in Kokomo and Marion, Indiana. I became familiar with the Poynter Institute when, shortly after "Welcome to TerrorLand" was published, one of its "ethics group leaders" pointed a finger at moi, my ownself. A reporter for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, which the Lindsays sold to the New York Times Co. in 1982 for a cool \$30 million, wrote on July 11, 2005: Why

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Then she talked about a lawsuit filed by an unnamed plaintiff suing me over Barry and 'the boys,' which she said was about "Barry Seals." Jeez, couldn't she at least spell his name right? Moving on to another unprincipled source, Rudi Dekkers, she quoted the S.O.B. calling me an S.O.B.: "This S.O.B., he doesn't realize he destroys families and people," Dekkers said in a telephone interview Thursday. "I have seen nothing that's the truth. He fantasizes. He fantasizes stories, and names." "If I had the money, would I sue him? Into hell," added Dekkers, a Dutch immigrant who now charts airplanes from Naples. "I would sue him into hell." With so many books published about Sept. 11, Hopsicker's tome may have gone unnoticed were it not for the Internet. Typing his name into Google brings up 13,200 results, several of which also mention Dekkers... Most of the results are conspiracy-theory Web sites, such as SanderHicks.com and OnlineJournal.com. Hopsicker's Web site is a mix of press releases, conspiracy theories, news stories and sales pitches. He sells his books online, along with several documentaries that he produced and funded himself.¹³ I could feel the vacuous hauteur dripping off her words. That's when I realized "somethin' wasn't jes' quite right," as an old mentor of mine used to say. In her snobbishness, she felt inclined to quote the expert in ethics from the Poynter Institute:

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“The problem with the Internet now is it’s a kind of anything-goes, Wild West frontier, and there’s not a lot of accountability,” said Kelly McBride, ethics group leader at journalism’s Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg. Only i6d then, it will be interesting to watch and see what the courts do to it.”¹⁴

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The same year George Lindsay arrived in Sarasota to live, 1927, a scathing indictment of Venice’s swindlers was published by an organization called the Trade Union Educational League – a faction within the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) controlled by William Z. Foster – began proclaiming that BLE Grand Chief Engineer Warren Stone had wrecked the union whose funds he had been entrusted to manage. Foster mocked Stone, who allegedly had said “it’s as easy to operate a bank as to run a peanut stand,” and he was suspicious when Stone had “proceeded to establish labor banks all over the country. All that was necessary was money to float them, then riches would come.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, members of Stone’s union, the Brotherhood, believed their leader. Foster said that, as a consequence of their faith in him, they “scraped together their savings and, trusting their officials implicitly, poured their money into the various financial schemes one after the other.”¹⁶ Building the city of Venice was only one of Stone’s “schemes,” but it was a huge one, which alone used up \$16 million in pension funds. Even more money in 1923 from the BLE funds had purchased less than a controlling share in the Empire Trust Company and in New York City’s Equitable Building at 120 Broadway. If we want to know who was ultimately behind the scheme – the wizard behind the curtain, as it were – the best tool for finding out is to use Cicero’s classic query in accusing Mark Antony of murdering Caesar: “Cui bono – To whose advantage was it?”¹⁷ William Z. Foster believed the labor movement had been infiltrated after World War I, when he said, “the United States became the most powerful capitalist country in the world. It passed from the status of debtor to a creditor nation, exporting capital from 1920 to 1929 to the then unheard-of total of \$20 billion. All over the world it conducted an active campaign to capture markets, as against other big countries which were weakened by the war.”¹⁸ “Super-heated soothsayers,” Foster said, proclaimed, “There would be no more economic crises or mass unemployment....The ‘New Capitalism’ was ... [an] American miracle.”¹⁹ That’s

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Foster's accusation was leveled primarily at Jay Lovestone, a secretive man who was ousted from the Communist Party for his pro-capitalist stance, by spouting what Foster called "the poison of American imperialist propaganda," which had infiltrated labor unions.²¹ After Lovestone was ousted from the Communist Party by Stalin himself, he continued to lead what biographer Ted Morgan called "a covert life."²² It was so covert, in fact, it's hard to tell whether he was working for the labor movement or was in fact a card-carrying member of the Central Intelligence Agency, and little was known about what he was up to until Frances Stonor Saunders published her work about the Congress of Cultural Freedom in 2000.²³ Lovestone was, however, on friendly terms with James Jesus Angleton, the CIA's "paranoid" Chief of counterintelligence,²⁴ and, according to Ted Morgan, it was Allen Dulles who transferred Lovestone over to Angleton's supervision in 1954.²⁵ Readers who are interested in the CIA's role in the labor movement, including who benefited from building Venice, are encouraged to read the sources named above.

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I found myself wondering where all that money came from to build such a luxurious palace, not to mention all the famous works of art. Surely there wasn't that much wealth to be made in a circus. Col. John Ringling, as I learned, was a railroad builder in Montana when he first met the father of a man mentioned in chapter 13. Jake Louis Hamon, Sr. in 1912 was an Oklahoma entrepreneur, whose son – I'm not making this up – ended up as a Dallas oil executive with close ties to the group of Russians who surrounded Lee Harvey Oswald's wife, Marina, and his "handler," George de Mohrenschildt. Hamon managed to team up with John Ringling in 1912 to build a railroad in southern Oklahoma. They struck oil on Ringling's railroad land – the Healdton Field – the biggest boom of those years.⁶³ Less than eight years after the oil gusher, reporters were on the scene in Ardmore, Oklahoma one day after Jake Hamon walked two blocks to the hospital, bleeding from a bullet wound. "Jake L. Hamon, Ardmore millionaire ... wounded Republican national committeeman" he was called repeatedly.⁶⁴ Although he claimed to have shot himself accidentally, the United Press wire service was quick to add that police had charged his long-time steno, Clara Barton Smith, of Ringling, Oklahoma, with attempted murder. UP then added succinctly, "and an information charging the couple with a 'statutory' offense."⁶⁵ Several years earlier, Clara had married Jake's nephew – who received money every month for the honor of covering Jake's infidelity. Marrying someone with the same last name as her lover made it much easier for Clara to share hotel rooms with Jake – you know, Mr. and Mrs. Hamon – even though it was a fraud. It took less time for the sleazy gossip

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John Ringling's role in the circus, while his older brothers lived, had been to travel abroad, ostensibly in search of new circus acts. One of his companions on those trips was a "showman," Sam Gumpertz, who managed Dreamland Amusements at Coney Island and Brighton Beach for years, until Dreamland went down in flames in 1911.⁷⁶ Arson investigations revealed rich, powerful and criminal men in New York had been investors who'd grouched they'd never seen one red cent of Dreamland's profits. These men included the Brooklyn Daily Eagle's managing editor, William Engeman, who coincidentally owned Brighton Beach racetrack. The name Arnold Rothstein was also listed in 1911, as one Dreamland investor who may have had a motive for arson.⁷⁷ Rothstein, after the 1911 fire, went on to bigger, if not better, things – like fixing the 1919 World Series. Dead by 1928 in a drive-by shooting, Rothstein left documents that Feds declared proved he had financed the nationwide "dope racket."

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So now we have two possibilities about who was using the Gulfstream for rendition of the unproven "terrorists." Take your pick: The CIA? Or the KGB? Or, perhaps it was a combination of the two, all rolled into what we now call trans-national organized crime? As Arik Kislin flew back and forth from New York to Russia and Ukraine during the '90s, what else was he engaged in? Hooking up – for starters – with famous Russian Mobster Mikhail Chernoy (sometimes Chernoi), who was fighting to capture a larger stake of the metals market, even as the Russian government was disintegrating. As chaos reigned amidst government corruption and the absence of viable capitalism, the Soviet economy fell apart in 1991 and Mikhail and his brother Lev became part of a particular Russian brand of crime arising from the longstanding black market. In 1996, according to Knut Royce of the Center for Public Integrity, Interpol revealed that Semyon "Kislin's firm, Trans Commodities, Inc., was used by Lev and Mikhail Chernoy, two reputed mobsters from Uzbekistan, for fraud and embezzlement. "A confidential 1994 FBI intelligence report on the Brooklyn, N.Y., mob organization headed by Vyacheslav Ivankov, the imprisoned godfather of Russian organized crime in the United States, lists Kislin as a 'member/associate' of Ivankov's gang," Royce reported. The 1994 report also claimed that Sam Kislin's company co-sponsored a Russian crime boss and contract killer for a US visa and asserted that he was a close associate of the late notorious German arms dealer Babeck Seroush, who settled in Russia before his death in 1992.⁸ As all this happened, Sam Kislin was one of the biggest donors to Rudy Giuliani (first as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York), who campaigned both for Governor of New York state and for the U.S. Senate. As U.S. Attorney, however, Giuliani had indicted Seroush in 1984 for conspiring to smuggle communications systems equipment to Austria for export to the USSR.⁹ Sam and Rudy remained close for years afterwards with Kislin's companies also hosting fundraisers for Rudy in his losing campaign for the U.S. Senate.¹⁰

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Ivankov himself was quoted saying, “There is no myth about organized crime in Russia. Everyone there knows that ‘Russia is one uninterrupted criminal swamp.’ The criminals are in the Kremlin and the Duma (the legislature). Anyone who thinks that someone is the head of all these ‘bandits’ is delirious.”³⁰ But that was quoted in 1998. Today everyone knows who’s in charge. Vladimir Putin. Sam Kislin seemed part of Ivankov’s operation; his donations to Rudolph Giuliani’s campaigns for mayor in 1993 and 1997 and the U.S. Senate in 2000 – estimated at over \$64,000 – may have been an attempt to turn the United States into the same type of criminal swamp he had known in the Soviet Union.

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“Du Pont’s Summit Aviation company, founded shortly after the CIA’s Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba, was organized with assistance from CIA operative Patrick Foley. During the next decade, Summit furnished ‘civic action’ aircraft for the CIA’s Air America network and sold converted warplanes to right-wing dictators in Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Vietnam. The conversion process from civilian aircraft to gunship boosted the sales price of an average Cessna 500 percent.”¹⁵ We also found the name “Richard du Pont” in Whitney Webb’s recent book, where she also described Patrick Foley as “a CIA operative,” who had “flown 747s on behalf of Flying Tiger Lines, the aviation company set up by the Chennaults.”¹⁶ Richard Chichester du Pont Jr. founded Summit Aviation and also was a “director at Edward [Bradford] du Pont’s Atlantic Aviation, where the aforementioned CIA asset and Bush ally, James R. Bath, had served as vice president,” Webb wrote.¹⁷ You can’t get much more CIA than that. Only problem was all our Richard C. du Ponts were deceased by 1988. Only a cousin called Dick du Pont would have been alive when Skyway was getting money from the du Pont Investment Fund. Was Richard S. involved? Or was it some kind of sick joke? Another du Pont, Edward Bradford du Pont, also an aviation-addict, was a cousin who lived until 2017.¹⁸ These men were born into what is possibly the biggest and tightest – and definitely the most powerful – American family of their day. The Dick du Pont, possibly the one mentioned above, Richard Simmons du Pont, had two important connections to the Bush family. His mother was Virginia Simmons, a granddaughter of the Simmons Hardware Co. founder in St. Louis, where Prescott Bush was employed when he met his wife, Dotty Walker. The Simmons and Walker families were close. Numerous Simmons sons were members of the same secret society at Yale which tapped Prescott and both George Bushes in their years there – Skull and Bones. The second connection was through

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Like the du Ponts, the late President Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.'s descendants were also very powerful, though not nearly as numerous as the du Ponts. Theodore Roosevelt IV called himself Teddy III (counting down from the President) and lived during the same time as his cousin, Kermit Roosevelt Jr. (called Kim), who spent his life in the CIA's covert operations branch. Teddy III's brother, Quentin Roosevelt II, had been Director of the China National Aviation Corporation, but was killed in a plane crash in Hong Kong on December 21, 1948, at the age of 29. Teddy had worked for the DuPont corporation before World War II and had settled in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. After the war, he was an investment banker in Philadelphia, only 30 miles northeast of Wilmington, Delaware. Kip du Pont co-founded Summit Aviation at Middleton, a few miles further south of Philly, as a fixed base of operations (FBO) which offered charter flights and services for general aviation. In 1961 Summit became a Cessna dealer and later added Lear Jet and Enstrom Helicopter dealerships.²⁶ In the late 1960s Kip joined with Joseph Walker Wear II – called Joey in his days at Andover in the early '50s – in creating a freight-cargo carrier called Del-Air, which would later be called Summit Airlines. Kip's father had died in a gliding accident in 1943. This turns out to be yet another Bush family connection to the du Ponts. Joey Wear was born in 1934 to William Potter and (Doris L. Stewart) Wear, and his paternal grandfather (the first Joseph Walker Wear) was the brother of Mrs. George Herbert Walker, Poppy Bush's namesake. The families were involved in very incestuous business relationship – with most of the men being stockbrokers promoting the stock of those actually involved in business.

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Poppy's dad, for example, Prescott Bush – whose wife was a Walker and first cousin of the Wears – was a business partner of the Harriman brothers, whose sister Carol nee Harriman was the second wife of a man named W. Plunket Stewart. His first wife had been a daughter of the head of the Pennsylvania Railroad, A. J. Cassatt. They were horsey folk who took fox hunts seriously. The Pennsylvania brokers and businessmen were also linked to the Bullitts, the Biddles, the Drexels – all those “old money” families that trace back to the First Bank of the U.S., not to mention to Wharton and perhaps even to Michael Milken. The Harrimans, after their merger with Alexander Brown's sons in the New York Brown Brothers firm, trace back to the opium smuggling families in the China trade. In the mid-1960s the people running the major railroads wanted to merge the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central (whose major shareholders were Vanderbilts, Whitneys and Harrimans by then). President Kennedy hadn't decided if he would oppose or approve it before his death. Not long after LBJ was sworn in, he quickly approved the merger. When the railroad assets were looted afterwards, the Penn Central ended up being lumped into Carl Lindner's grab bag called American Financial Corporation – along with the old United Fruit company, Great Southwest Corp., Six Flags, and several others. Linda Minor was writing about these scandals while I was focusing on Barry Seal. Who knew then it was all about the same thing?

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I was curious why these young scions of such notable families were lazing in the sun at the Third Turtle Inn with Fritz Ludington. My first thought was drug smuggling, natch. In my book about Barry Seal, I wrote: "Summit Aviation, was doing business with Barry Seal, proved by records in his widow's possession. According to congressional sources, Summit did 'contract' work for the CIA, had former CIA personnel on the payroll, and had been linked through ownership records to the Cessna that crashed while bombing Managua."²⁷ All the foregoing links between the name du Pont and the CIA now lead us to only one question – whether the Richard du Pont, allegedly the principal in the du Pont Investment Fund was a real person whose money was being washed through Jonathan Curshen's Du Pont Investment Fund 57289, Inc. or just a fake name, made up to honor a CIA hero. It's not unlike the question about Donna Blue Aviation. As I thought at that time, the biggest clue of the true identity of the individuals or organization operating behind the dummy front of "Donna Blue Aircraft" was in its initials, "DBA," for "doing business as." It was the kind of cute nomenclature for which "the boys" are known to be fond. The boys like to play games. It amuses them to use the names of their heroes as a ploy to throw the uninitiated off the track. Then they watch confused mortals run around in circles in an attempt to decipher their poor excuse for tradecraft.

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Arik met William Achenbaum (owner of the Gulfstream II) and his son Michael, possibly as a result of being neighbors in Great Neck, Long Island.²⁸ Was it an abandoned building in search of funding or dirty money in search of a project that got the ball rolling? At any rate, the two came together and became quite a hit.²⁹ “By 2001, Arik Kislin was prepared for his next venture, partnering with the Achenbaum family to form the Gansevoort Hotel Group (GHG).”³⁰ Had the Gulfstream II drug plane – also implicated in CIA covert ops like illegal kidnapping and transportation of suspected terrorists never formally charged or tried – also been used to accommodate Russian intel? It’s a legitimate question which remains – like so much else touching on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime – unasked and unanswered. It smells of cover-up. Sam Kislin was instrumental in creating the scenario for which Trump was impeached – trying to bribe acting Ambassador Gordon Sondland into extorting from President Zelensky a promise to dig up dirt on the Biden family. Does anyone remember that big highlight of Trump Impeachment I: “I want you to do me a favor though.” Before Zelensky was elected as Ukraine’s President, Sam Kislin had bought a Cypress-based shell company called Opalcore Ltd., which consisted of some of the assets President Viktor Yanukovych had stolen from the Ukrainian government – one of 400 such shells listed in a secret lawsuit leaked in 2018 to the public by Al Jazeera.³¹ Yanukovych put his deputy, Viktor Yushchenko, in charge of these assets and then fled to Russia in 2014, just as Putin began his invasion of Crimea, which was part of Ukraine. It was like Mexico deciding to take Texas back. Except most Americans today might thank Mexico for doing them a favor. Yushchenko in turn redelegated the task to Arkady Kashkin, and then promptly fled for Russia, leaving poor Arkady, the last man standing. Kashkin was getting threats from Ukrainian prosecutor Yuri Lutsenko. “Hand over the stolen property, or else!” Naturally he caves. What has Putin done for him? So Lutsenko takes the money out of the bank and puts it back in Ukraine’s state treasury. Kislin, who had bought a small fraction of the \$1.5 billion in stolen government bonds, believed his share was enough for him to exert pressure on everyone he knew in the United States to get it back for him.

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He started with Rudy Giuliani, then moved on to Donald Trump. From there he went to U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch in Ukraine. Trump fired her in May 2019, leaving State Department personnel William Taylor and Fiona Hill in place to answer to the new acting Ambassador Sondland, who had no experience in such matters. Taylor and Hill became cautious when they saw Sam Kislin’s messages addressed to the ex-Ambassador, in which he claimed to be “an informal adviser to US President Donald Trump on Eastern Europe.”³²

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Mykola Zlochevsky, the ecology minister who headed Burisma Holdings and named Hunter Biden to its board, was part of Yanukovych's administration. He fled Ukraine in 2016. It was almost as though Hunter was sheep-dipped to work undercover. He should write a tell-all book once it's all said and done.

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McCain's campaign manager, Rick Davis, was being paid through an entity that existed in 2007-2008, tasked with developing GEMS – Global Electronic Monitoring System, described in a book by Jim Marrs, published in 2010.¹⁹ GEMS, originally created by Premier Election Solutions, a subsidiary of Diebold, was already "developed," as Marrs revealed in his book:

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According to research by PC Magazine, "Roughly 25% of votes cast in the U.S. employ this system, and there has been a lot of controversy over its use. GEMS was found to be easily compromised if election officials were not extremely careful."²¹

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This entity "received payments from the McCain campaign for Web services, collecting \$971,860 through March 2008."²² McCain's spokesman, Brian Jones, told a reporter from US News in 2007 that Davis "did not disclose his interest in 3eDC to Senator McCain. 3eDC helped build the campaign's website and maintains its infrastructure," but Davis refused to describe the contract between the campaign and 3edc LLC," whose other owner was Paul Manafort, Steve Bannon's predecessor at the helm of Donald Trump's campaign.²³

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An experienced Goldman Sachs investment banker in Beverly Hills for several years after completing his master's degree, Bannon also became something of an expert in media packaging – old movies and TV shows produced by various studios that could be resold to cable TV and other re-run networks. Bannon himself made a personal small fortune off Seinfeld. What he's never seemed to brag about is that he also spent several years as CEO of a strange corporation called Biosphere 2, which Wired magazine discovered in 2016: "Twenty-five years ago, a New Agey-experiment called Biosphere 2 set out to recreate life on another planet with eight people locked in a giant glass habitat. But it ended bitterly with allegations of financial fraud, scientific goof-ups, and a power struggle outside the dome."

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But what's important about Andy Badolato is: He's no ordinary grifter. Many of his biggest scams have had quasi-official sanction. One example: He partnered with Lockheed and Raytheon – companies Adnan Khashoggi started brokering deals for as early as 1964 – and helmed a company which got a \$200 million loan from Florida Governor Jeb Bush's business initiative, "Enterprise Florida." Alas, "Enterprise Florida," and Florida taxpayers, both took a bath on that loan.
