

## *Special Report*

### **The GOP's many Talons**

#### **Did White House S&M ring order special videos from Abu Ghraib?**

**By Wayne Madsen**

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February 23, 2005—There are interesting connections between the White House credentialed Talon News Service, owned by Houston-based GOP activist Bobby Eberle, Jr., and two other “Talon” entities. One is investment and management company Talon LLC of Detroit, co-founded by Michael T. Timmis, a major contributor to conservative Republican causes. Talon Equity Partners LLC is an adjunct of Talon LLC. The other GOP-connected “Talon” firm is Talon LLC of Houston, a “special purpose entity” established by the now defunct GOP bankroller, Enron.

In April 2000, Enron and LJM2, a co-investment entity headed by Enron Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow, set up Talon LLC. Fastow was later indicted and found guilty of multiple counts of fraud. His boss at Enron, CEO Ken Lay, a close friend of and contributor to George W. Bush, was also indicted and is awaiting trial. The Talon entity experienced a 370 percent annualized return on an original investment of preferred Enron stock and made \$41 million for LJM2. Investigators in Houston are still trying to determine what happened to Enron’s original profits before its stock tanked. There are suspicions that much of the money ended up in well protected and hidden Bush family and GOP coffers.

Timmis is a major contributor to The Fellowship Foundation, a powerful “Christian” fundamentalist operation headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. The Fellowship has interlocking relationships with the Leadership Institute, also of Arlington, Virginia, where Talon White House correspondent “Jeff Gannon,” a.k.a. James Dale Guckert, took a two-day course at the institute’s Broadcast School of Journalism. The Leadership Institute, headed by Virginia Republican official Morton Blackwell, counts such right-wing members of Congress as Tom DeLay, Frank Wolf, Sam Brownback, John Ensign, Todd Tiahrt, Charles Grassley, James Inhofe, Zach Wamp, and Joseph Pitts as members of its “bi-partisan” congressional Board of Advisors. The above Republican members of Congress are also core members of The Fellowship. Gannon has been linked to Fellowship members who are active in two northern Virginia churches heavily influenced by the Fellowship: Little Falls Presbyterian Church in Arlington and McLean Bible Church in nearby McLean. Gannon is also linked to Rev. Rob Schenk, the founder of Washington’s National Community Church, a Pentecostal congregation that counts John and Janet Ashcroft as members. It currently meets in a movie theater at Union Station in Washington, DC.

The Fellowship is financially backed by companies with lucrative defense contracts with the Pentagon, many of which are based in northern Virginia. Some of these companies are involved with prisoner detention contracts in Iraq, Cuba, and Afghanistan.

The discovery of Gannon’s involvement with military-oriented gay pornographic sites having sado-masochistic overtones, including urination, has a number of observers looking for a connection with the documented cases of prisoner sexual abuse by U.S. military members and contractors. That abuse included male-on-male rape, male-on-female rape, the sodomizing by U.S. and allied military personnel of young male and teen prisoners with such implements as glow sticks and broom handles, forcing naked male prisoners to form human pyramids, guards urinating on prisoners, forcing prisoners to smear themselves with feces, and subjecting prisoners to forced masturbation.

The presence of cameras in prison facilities had many Washington insiders wondering if the gay S&M prostitution ring centered in the White House had access to pornographic videos from torture centers such as Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

A classified Defense Department's report on the prisoner abuse contained several references to sexual and S&M-oriented behavior by U.S. guards:

- a. (S) Punching, slapping, and kicking detainees; jumping on their naked feet;
  - b. (S) Videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees;
  - c. (S) Forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions *for photographing*;
  - d. (S) Forcing detainees to remove their clothing and keeping them naked for several days at a time;
  - e. (S) Forcing naked male detainees to *wear women's underwear*;
  - f. (S) Forcing groups of male detainees to *masturbate* themselves while being photographed and videotaped;
  - g. (S) Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them;
  - h. (S) Positioning a naked detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture;
  - i. (S) Writing "I am a Rapest" [sic] on the leg of a detainee alleged to have forcibly raped a 15-year old fellow detainee, and then photographing him naked;
  - j. (S) Placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee's neck and having a female Soldier pose for a picture;
  - k. (S) A male MP guard having sex with a female detainee;
  - 1. (S) Using military working dogs (without muzzles) to intimidate and frighten detainees, and in at least one case biting and severely injuring a detainee;
  - m. (S) Taking photographs of dead Iraqi detainees.
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- a. (U) Breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees;
  - b. (U) Threatening detainees with a loaded 9mm pistol;
  - c. (U) Pouring cold water on naked detainees;
  - d. (U) Beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair;
  - e. (U) Threatening male detainees with *rape*;
  - f. (U) Allowing a military police guard to stitch the wound of a detainee who was injured after being slammed against the wall in his cell;
  - g. (U) Sodomizing a detainee with a *chemical light* and perhaps a *broom stick*.
  - h. (U) Using military working dogs to frighten and intimidate detainees with threats of attack, and in one instance actually biting a detainee.

One of the Defense Department contractors cited in the Abu Ghraib scandal was Titan of San Diego. It has subsequently been discovered that GOPUSA.com, the parent company of Talon News Service, had Steven Findlay on its board of directors. Findlay was the founder of a Marshall, Texas-based defense contractor called Titan Dynamics. In 2002, Allied Defense Group bought Titan Dynamics. In 2002, federal investigators stepped up their ongoing investigation of Titan of San Diego for engaging in fraud on software contracts at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts. Titan's contract partner, Dynamics Research, also came under investigation. Investigators used the term "Titan Dynamics" in describing their investigation at Hanscom.

Another firm tied to contract fraud was Affiliated Computer Systems (ACS) of Dallas, Texas, a company with close ties to Bush and the GOP. In 1992, ACS's chairman Darwin Deason settled with the government on charges relating to the transfer of \$61 million of computers and other assets from two Texas savings and loans, First Texas Savings and Gibraltar, just prior to the thrifts' failure. In 2002, 64 percent of ACS's political contributions went to Republicans.

A May 2004 email to senior officials of the FBI, labeled "On Scene Commander—Baghdad," indicated that much of the abusive tactics used at Abu Ghraib had been authorized by President Bush. The email stated Bush authorized sleep deprivation, stress positions, the use of military dogs, and 'sensory deprivation through the use of hoods, etc.'"

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