

Special Report

'Cha Ching,' from ¢¢¢ to \$\$\$: How the Bush Crime Syndicate funneled foreign cash into the U.S. political system

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FLORIDA PANHANDLE, June 21, 2005 (waynemadsenreport.com)—Experienced federal investigators, acting independently, have discovered a covert funding channel used by the 2000 and 2004 Bush-Cheney campaigns and the administrations of Jeb Bush in Florida and Bob Taft in Ohio to illegally funnel foreign and other questionable money into Republican coffers.

Ever since the brutal death of Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) investigator Ray Lemme in July 2003, the focus of investigators in Florida and Georgia has been on the political scandal Lemme was uncovering. After his official investigation of contract fraud, money laundering, illegal immigration, and election fraud was shut down on orders of Jeb Bush, Lemme continued to investigate the use of FDOT to launder cash for the Bush brothers and their allies. Lemme's focus was on the use of the Florida Turnpike system to launder cash for the Jeb and George W. Bush campaigns. It was an investigation that would ultimately lead to Lemme's body being discovered in a motel room bathtub in Valdosta, Georgia. A two-state police cover-up of Lemme's death, threats directed at Florida and Georgia investigators, and a virtual media blackout indicates that the GOP administrations of Jeb Bush and Georgia's Sonny Perdue wanted the Lemme story to go away—and fast.

The reason for the cover-up of Lemme's reported "suicide" is simple. Investigators have now discovered that foreign cash, including Chinese, Saudi, and Nigerian money, was laundered via the biggest state-run cash cow in Florida—the Florida Turnpike system. Because most of the transactions involving Florida's toll roads involve cash and huge amounts of it, it was easy for foreign and other questionable money to be laundered via FDOT.

Lemme had reportedly become aware of the use of FDOT to commit criminal acts. Valdosta, where Lemme went to meet a still unknown source, is a key center for international organized criminal activity, including illegal foreign worker smuggling, involving close political allies of George W. and Jeb Bush.

Flashback: From Dec. 6, 2004 article "Texas to Florida: White House-linked clandestine operation paid for "vote switching" software," Wayne Madsen, OnlineJournal.com:

Yang's [Yang Enterprises] questionable billing activities with its Florida DOT contract came to the attention of Ray C. Lemme, a seasoned senior investigator with the Florida DOT Inspector General's Office and a combat veteran of the Vietnam War. Lemme had a lot of evidence to suspect that Yang was overbilling the DOT for "millions." After discovering Yang's dirty laundry, Curtis went to work for the DOT. Mavis Georgalis, the DOT's contracting officer for the Yang contract, was also aware of improprieties with the contract. As a result of pressure from the Florida State House, both Curtis and Georgalis were eventually fired by the DOT because of their complaints about the Yang contract. Someone was obviously trying to send Curtis a message when, on August 14, 2002, he discovered that someone poisoned his pet Pomeranian dog, Emily. Lemme was forced to stop his official investigation of Yang for similar reasons. However, he decided to

continue an "unofficial" investigation of Yang and its practices on the side. It was a fateful decision.

According to DOT employees familiar with the Yang case, Lemme was aware that it was Jeb Bush who personally shut down his investigation of Yang. Lemme also leaked details concerning his investigation to the Daytona Beach News Journal. The investigator had previously requested a full audit of the Yang contract with the DOT, a request that was denied. Lemme also became aware of something else outside the framework of the DOT contract—that Yang had been involved in producing a prototype vote switching program for use with touch screen voting machines and that Tom Feeney was in on the scam. The last time Clint Curtis spoke to Lemme, he remembers the silver haired investigator excited about where his case was leading. Lemme told Curtis that the cover up of Yang was coming from "as high up as I could imagine" and that he had "proof" that was "shocking."

On Sunday, June 29, 2003, evidence indicates that Lemme drove from Tallahassee to Valdosta, Georgia, the home of Moody Air Force Base. A motel receipt indicated that Lemme checked in at the Knight's Inn off Interstate 75 at 6:49 P.M. Lemme's wife said that her husband left home for work on Monday, June 30, at 5:15 A.M., an hour earlier than usual. According to a Leon County Sheriff's report, Lemme's wife said she received a voice message after she returned home at 6:45 P.M. on Monday. The message was from her husband's supervisor, Bob Clift, who informed her that earlier in the day, at 6:15 A.M., Lemme called into work, left a message, and said he would not be coming to work that day. Clift said he was checking up on Ray Lemme. Mrs. Lemme called Clift and told him that her husband was not at home. Mrs. Lemme told police that her husband was working on a "big case." Mrs. Lemme filed a missing person report with the Leon County, Sheriff's Office. Clift later determined that Ray Lemme made his earlier call to work at 6:15 A.M., one hour after he supposedly left his home for work, from a pay phone at the junction of Interstate 10 and Highway 1 in Jefferson County, Florida. Shortly after 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, July 1, the maid assigned to clean Lemme's room—132—received no answer when she knocked. The door was locked. There was no response when the maid called the room's telephone. The hotel manager then called the police.

The following is from the Valdosta Police Detective Report filed by Detective Craig Spencer and dated July 1, 2003: "On July 1, 2003 at approximately 1330 hours, I received a page advising me to be en route to Knights Inn at 2110 West Hill Avenue in reference to an unattended death." When Spencer and other police officers and detectives arrived at the motel, the manager told them that the occupant of Room 132, Ray Lemme, was to have checked out by 11A.M. The officers yelled through the slightly ajar door but received no answer and they discovered the upper swing latch was locked. The officers used a special tool provided by the motel to open the swing latch lock. Spencer said that one of the officers entered the room and found a suicide note and then proceeded to the bathroom where Lemme was found dead in the bathtub. Police also discovered that the inside of Lemme's left elbow—the cubital tunnel—was slashed. There were spurts of blood on the wall but no blood found on the floor. A belt possibly used as a tourniquet and a double- edged straight razor blade were found on the side of the tub. A bath towel was unfolded and neatly placed on the floor next to the tub.

Later on July 1, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory in Moultrie informed the Valdosta Police that based on the "suicide" details, no autopsy would be performed on Lemme. Unlike Florida, Georgia does not perform mandatory autopsies. A doctor, with 25 years' clinical experience, who was interviewed for this story, claimed that the circumstances of Lemme's death appeared to him to be a classic "mob hit." If the Leon County Sheriff missing person report is to be believed, it is clear that someone other than Lemme checked into the Valdosta motel on Sunday evening using his name. Clearly, the Leon County Sheriff's report contains a number of details that directly conflict

with facts found in the Valdosta Police report. In addition, the Lowndes County, Georgia, Coroner's report fails to indicate an estimated time of death based on a full medical examination—it surmised that the time of death was the same time as indicated on the suicide note: 8:10 A.M. on July 1.

An empty manila folder and a blank legal pad notebook were found on the hotel room's desk along with an undated and unsigned suicide note written on lined paper, which lacked any identifiable fingerprints, from Lemme's day planner. The note merely contained the time 8:10 A.M. with the following notation: "I love my family (family underlined once) with all my heart. I am sorry. I am depressed and in pain. Mary Ann (Lemme's wife), I love you." ("I love you" underlined twice). It was certainly not indicative of a person who was ecstatic that he was finally going to nail a long investigation that involved vote rigging, overbilling, and fraud abetted by the very top political leadership in Tallahassee. Interestingly, the last number on Lemme's pager (an 850 960-XXXX) ended with the number "911." It is also interesting that Lemme's watch, when discovered by the police, was stopped at 12:34 P.M. on June 30—a possible indication that Lemme was trying to convey the time of a possible in extremis situation. Also, Lemme's Florida driver's license was in his room while his wallet was in the glove box of his car, which was parked in front of the room. Two motel receipts were found in Lemme's room by the police. One was a check-in receipt dated June 29 and timed at 6:44 P.M. The other was a receipt, without a notation of check-in or check-out, dated June 30 and timed at 6:54 A.M. A witness told police that Lemme's car was parked in front of his room on the afternoon of June 30.

Sergeant Eugene Bell of the Valdosta Police Department interviewed a 39-year old female guest who was staying in Room 236 over the weekend. She and her daughter noticed three men standing in the parking lot across from Lemme's room at 8 A.M. on the morning of July 1. The behavior of the men made the guest suspicious enough that the woman initially believed the men were engaged in a drug deal. According to the police report, the camera used to photograph the crime scene was later discovered to have a defect in the flash memory card. The defect resulted in no usable photographs being submitted with the official police report.

Later, veteran GAO and FBI investigative specialist John Caylor discovered that the Valdosta Police story about a defective digital camera memory stick and the purported lack of crime scene photos of Lemme's motel room was a ruse. Caylor was able to obtain the crime scene photos of Lemme from the Valdosta Police. Lemme's body, found in Room 132 of the Knights Inn bathtub, clearly shows that he was brutally beaten and strangled prior to his death—reported by police to have been from a self-inflicted razor cut to his arm.

It is unlikely that Lemme, who told former FDOT and Yang programmer Clint Curtis that he was on the verge of cracking a huge case that went straight "to the top," would have traveled to a state like Georgia, where autopsies are not mandatory, to commit suicide. Moreover, Lemme drove a beeline route to Valdosta, an indication that he was anxious to meet with his "source." Lemme had been informed that a Chinese sub-contract programmer for Yang named Henry Nee (aka Hai Lin Nee), who had been busted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers for illegally transferring missile parts to China, had been given the Social Security number of an Iowa resident. Although Nee had only been in the United States for five years, his Social Security number from Iowa had been issued to another individual 24 years earlier. Valdosta is a center for illegal smuggling and it was this nexus of illegal alien smuggling and money laundering that attracted Lemme to the city.

After Lemme's death, Valdosta criminal activities and bribes paid to Florida politicians became the subject of a grand jury investigation run by US Attorney for Northwest Florida Greg Miller. Miller's investigation reportedly dovetailed with Lemme's probe of money laundering involving FDOT and Florida turnpike receipts. The chairman of the Florida Transportation Commission, who has control of FDOT and the turnpike system, is Earl K. Durden, a major GOP player in Florida who is close to both Jeb and George

W. Bush. Durden was appointed to the Transportation Commission post by Jeb Bush. When Miller's investigation of money laundering was leaked, it was George W. Bush who personally flew to Florida from Washington to close down the entire probe.

Eight Florida Panhandle counties west of Tallahassee (Bay, Gulf, Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, Santa Rosa, and Escambia) and the border counties of Georgia (Lowndes, Echols, Brooks, Thomas, Grady and Decatur) and Alabama (Houston, Geneva, Covington, Escambia, and Baldwin) have long been centers of illicit Bush activities dating back to the Iran-contra and savings and loan failures. Lowndes County, where Valdosta is located, is a major center for Bush-connected criminal activity. Gulf and Bay counties are centers for Jeb Bush-connected organized crime activity.

Now comes word that "Coingate" in Ohio is tied to the same criminal elements in the GOP that were responsible for turnpike toll money laundering in Florida. Durden's counterpart in Ohio, Tommy Noe, a Bush "Pioneer" contributor whom Gov. Taft appointed to the Ohio Turnpike Commission, is in the center of a major scandal involving missing state funds invested in rare coins and baseball cards. Shortly after the *Toledo Blade* began reporting on the Ohio coin scandal, Noe resigned from the turnpike commission.

An additional investigation of missing Ohio state revenue is focused on millions of state dollars invested in a hedge fund. Federal investigators are investigating charges that Noe laundered some of the missing \$12 million from the state's coin fund into the Bush 2004 campaign. Mr. Bush has returned a mere \$4,000 from Noe's contributions. Ohio and Florida were the scenes of major election fraud in 2004. It now appears that both states laundered hundreds of millions of dollars to engage in massive fraud involving all sectors of state government, from election officials and secretaries of state to state auditors and attorneys general.

Ohio and Florida have the highest turnpike toll rates in the nation coupled with the least oversight. Both states, rife with political corruption fostered by the patrician Republican Taft and Bush families, are now the center of Coingate scandals tied to political chicanery and money laundering.

Manhattan's veteran District Attorney Robert Morgenthau is on the verge of penetrating a major conduit for foreign money into the Bush family network and the American political system that parallels the campaign finance scandals in Ohio and Florida. Morgenthau's investigation of the notorious brothers, Sam and Charlie Wyly of Texas, the billionaires who spearheaded the Swift Boat disinformation campaign against John Kerry and a similar distortion effort against John McCain in 2000, is focused on a Wyly-controlled Isle of Man off-shore account tied to the Bank of America. In 1989, George H. W. Bush dispatched a Houston attorney to the Isle of Man to take charge of the secret Bush accounts. One of the accounts was Five Star Trust, a multi-billion dollar account used by the Bushes as a covert offshore money tranche for their political and business purposes.

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