
Justice Department

Shaheen and other coverup suspects

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Reports are circulating in Washington, D.C., that certain networks within the Criminal Division and the Office of Public Responsibility of the Department of Justice may be involved in a criminal conspiracy to cover up government crimes relating to the Carter administration's Abscam frame-ups of members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

According to sources in the nation's capital, Justice Department operatives are conducting an investigation into a \$35,000 investment in a publication edited by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson. The alleged source of the investment was U.S. Senator Harrison Williams (D-N.J.), a victim of the Abscam frame-ups whose cause has been championed in Anderson's columns. The sources report that the "investment" story is a fraud authored by the Justice Department to provide grounds for conducting a cover-up of the new, massive evidence that has been submitted to the Department of Justice and to Washington, D.C. Federal District Court Judge William Bryant as the result of Anderson's ongoing independent inquiry into Abscam "sting" operative Melvin Weinberg.

EIR has been informed that one of the central figures in the alleged cover-up and false allegations effort is Michael Shaheen of the Justice Department's Office of Public Responsibility (OPR).

Cover up witchhunt tactics

According to one New York City area source intimately familiar with the inner workings of the Organized Crime Strike Force, Eastern District of New York, Michael Shaheen has been the primary Justice Department official responsible for concealing government misconduct in Abscam since the initial illegal leaking of confidential FBI and Justice Department documents facilitated the handing down of phony indictments in spring 1980.

According to FBI documents made available only *after* all of the Abscam defendants had already been indicted, tried and convicted, as late as January 1980 the FBI and Strike Force head-hunters who were after the scalp of Sen. Harrison Williams were forced to

acknowledge that they had no grounds for indictment of Williams.

Rather than pursue an investigation that was without merit, FBI and Strike Force personnel in New York leaked word to the *New York Times* and other publications of the ongoing "sting" efforts against a half dozen U.S. Congressmen—and then proceeded to demand Grand Jury indictments on the grounds that the leaks had shut off the government's ability to pursue any further investigations. Through this maneuver, Eastern District Strike Force head Thomas Puccio was able to land his indictments—including an indictment against Sen. Williams.

What made this entire criminal operation possible was the ongoing cover-up effort carried out personally by Michael Shaheen. As the result of the February 1980 *New York Times* leaking of the Abscam "sting," Shaheen was charged with overall responsibility for unearthing the source of the *Times*' story. After months of investigation, Shaheen issued findings that particularly whitewashed the role of Strike Force head Puccio, despite reports from informed sources that at least one of the press calls was made to a Philadelphia newspaper from a phone in Puccio's private office in Brooklyn. For this cover-up, Shaheen received, according to a New York City source, a \$6,000 bonus from the Department of Justice.

Other sources have reported that this was not the first time that Shaheen was personally involved in coming to the aid of Puccio when he violated Department guidelines and even criminal statutes. During the mid-1970s, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) amassed a voluminous file on Puccio, centering around Puccio's dealings with several major international heroin traffickers whom he was providing with sealed grand jury documents that identified, among other classified government evidence, the names of DEA informants inside the international drug ring.

Billygate taint

The same Michael Shaheen was the Carter administration's "Mr. Fixit" in the Billygate affair. Shaheen issued the Office of Public Responsibility findings that thoroughly vindicated President Carter, national security adviser Brzezinski, and then Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti from any wrongdoing in the sordid affair that reportedly resulted in at least \$25 million being stashed in a Carter family offshore bank account.

Shaheen's brother William was the U.S. attorney in New Hampshire during Jimmy Carter's presidency. Investigators are probing his possible involvement in attempts to interfere with the campaign of Lyndon LaRouche in the 1980 Democratic primary. LaRouche is known as an outspoken opponent of the forces represented by his brother.