

Starr uses open thuggery in 'Get Clinton' drive

by Edward Spannaus

Whitewater special prosecutor Kenneth Starr and his staff are resorting to unabashed thuggery in their efforts to frame up Bill and Hillary Clinton around spurious Whitewater charges. Starr's tactics became shameless in the days leading up to the scheduled sentencing of James McDougal, Susan McDougal, and former Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker—to the point that Starr's office was leaking reports that James McDougal was "cooperating" with Starr's office, while strong-arming Susan McDougal to attempt to gain her "cooperation."

The wild-card in the situation is, as it has always been, the only serious Arkansas scandal that exists: the drug-smuggling and gun-running operation run out of Mena, Arkansas in the mid-1980s by George Bush and Ollie North. This is the backdrop to many of the so-called "Whitewater" allegations, and it is a story that Starr is determined to keep buried, while trying to create the aura of criminal wrongdoing around the Clintons.

In so doing, Starr—the not-so-independent counsel—is following a script drafted in London, and laundered into the United States through the Hollinger Corp. *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Times* of London, and retailed through their American outlets such as the *American Spectator*, the *Washington Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Starr squeeze

It is the estimate of most honest observers, that Starr has no case whatsoever against Bill Clinton, and that his only case against Mrs. Clinton is one that would revolve around the kind of trivial violations that almost anyone involved in real estate and banking operations in the deregulated 1980s was involved in. Indeed, what went on in Little Rock was penny-ante stuff compared to what was going on in George Bush's Texas during the free-wheeling 1980s.

So, Starr has no case. Thus, he has attempted to use the

classic prosecutor's "stepping stone" strategy of trying to squeeze lower-lever participants, so that they will turn on their former associates and friends, in order to save their own necks. Only, such prosecutorial goon-squad tactics are usually not carried out so openly, as is being done now by Bush-Leaguer Starr.

With the May convictions of the McDougals and Tucker—accomplished with the aid of a contaminated jury—Starr's office let loose a torrent of leaks that one or the other of the McDougal-Tucker trio was "cooperating." But, Starr in fact had originally anticipated that he could force them to cooperate *without* even having to go to trial, said *New York Post* columnist John Crudele on May 29. "Early in the Tucker-McDougal investigation, a source inside Starr's office told me the strategy was to convict the three first and hope to leverage those convictions into testimony against the Clintons," Crudele wrote. But, he added, Starr didn't really expect the Tucker-McDougal case to go this far, hoping instead that they "would take one of the plea offers that were dangled in front of them in exchange for information on the Clintons."

A year earlier, Tucker had refused to testify before Starr's grand jury in Little Rock, and he publicly accused Starr of improperly pressuring the governor's wife and lots of "ordinary folks" in Arkansas for information. "Many of those people have had their wives threatened and their futures threatened. Just sheer intimidation," Tucker said. "If I don't resist this kind of stuff, who will?"

Less than a week later, on June 8, 1995, Starr responded by indicting Tucker. Said Tucker: "This has been part of the political campaign waged by the Whitewater prosecutor to vilify and assassinate the character of his selected targets, before trial, and to use their massive powers of threat, intimi-

ation, and promise to obtain the testimony they want,” he said. “Starr has overseen a prosecution filled with deliberate partisan zeal and characterized by the sharing of information with members of Congress, national Republican officials, members of the press, and his private law firm.”

After the convictions of Tucker and the McDougals, in the days leading up to their scheduled Aug. 19-20 sentencing, a renewed flood of leaks poured out of Starr’s office, claiming that James McDougal had been “turned” by Starr. The purpose of the leaks, which were totally unsubstantiated, appears to have been 1) to put pressure on the other defendants, Governor Tucker and Susan McDougal, to make a deal, 2) to polish up Starr’s image after the recent acquittals in the Branscum-Hill trial, and 3) to increase the media drumbeat against the Clintons.

It is obvious that McDougal would make a terrible witness, having already given testimony—much of it contradictory—and suffering from serious memory lapses. Starr therefore got the most mileage out of McDougal’s situation by asking the court to postpone his sentencing for 90 days, which has the maximum psychological-warfare effect.

During his own trial last March, McDougal said that he had already been offered immunity “to back up the lies of David Hale,” who was the prosecution’s star witness; McDougal said then that he had “declined immediately.”

When former Governor Tucker came up for sentencing, he was given a sentence of four years probation, with 18 months of house arrest, because of his medical condition. According to news accounts, Whitewater prosecutors had been pressing for the maximum sentence, and were “dumbfounded” by the lenient sentence. The *New York Times* reported that prosecutors pressed for the heaviest sentence, “in hopes that a harsh sentence would encourage him and his co-defendants to cooperate.” Tucker again said that the prosecutors were threatening to indict his wife.

Although rumors had also been prevalent in the news media that Tucker himself was seeking a deal with prosecutors, this was clearly not the case. Tucker displayed “neither regret or contrition” at sentencing, and afterwards, he continued to proclaim his innocence, saying that he hopes for and expects “complete vindication.”

After Susan McDougal was sentenced the next day to two years in prison, her attorney accused Starr’s team of coming down on her “with all their crushing power” because she would not give evidence against the President and the First Lady. Attorney Bobby McDaniel said that the Whitewater prosecutors told his client that, if she would cooperate, they would recommend probation with no prison time, and that they would take care of charges pending against her in California. “And because she didn’t succumb to their pressure, the full weight of the independent counsel, with all of their power and leverage, was brought down to bear upon her,” McDaniel said.

McDaniel told reporters that his client had become “a

political prisoner,” and he said that “the entire objective of prosecuting Susan McDougal was not to go after Susan McDougal, but to try to get someone who would fulfill a political agenda, to try to get someone to say something against Bill or Hillary Clinton.” After her conviction last May, according to McDaniel, prosecutor Ray Jahn, a top deputy to Starr, told him that they wanted her cooperation. McDaniel said that Ray Jahn told him: “Well, you know the focus of our investigation is Bill and Hillary Clinton. That’s what we’re looking for.”

But, McDaniel said, to his knowledge, “Susan does not know any incriminating information on Bill and Hillary Clinton.” So, McDaniel reported, “Susan did not accede to their demand, and as a result, they came into this courtroom one day willing to recommend probation, and it deemed appropriate, the next day, when she wouldn’t meet their demand, insisting upon a harsh prison sentence.”

Mena uncovered

While Starr wields such tactics of pressure and intimidation to concoct a case against the President and the First Lady, he is using kid gloves when it comes to the real crimes in Arkansas—the drug-running and money-laundering operations run by George Bush and Ollie North in the 1980s. There are not one but two special prosecutors in Arkansas—the second being Donald Smaltz, assigned to investigate former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, chicken magnate Don Tyson, etc.—and, as *EIR* has repeatedly stressed, their real job is to keep the Mena story covered up and buried, while doing maximum damage to President Clinton in other areas.

However, a recently published report suggests that a forthcoming report by CIA Inspector General Fred Hitz may finally acknowledge CIA involvement in the Mena operations. A CIA spokesman told *EIR* in early August that Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa) had asked the agency last May to conduct an internal inquiry about the Mena allegations.

An anonymous “British journalist and political observer” (reliably reported to be the *Sunday Telegraph*’s Ambrose Evans-Pritchard), writing in the Greensburg, Pennsylvania, *Tribune-Review* on Aug. 18, claims that this is part of a “share-the-blame” tactic to be used by the administration and CIA director John Deutch to protect Clinton; he writes: “Our belief is that the Hitz report . . . will establish that the Contra supply program began while Ronald Reagan was in charge and George Bush was his vice-president. There will be CIA contract employees ready to say that conservative former Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North knew all about the drug-smuggling operations and to smear the reputations of several now-dead American patriots such as former Director of Central Intelligence Bill Casey. Clinton’s spin doctors will argue that good old Governor Clinton was just doing his patriotic duty by going along with the secret activity . . . and that any problems should be laid at the feet of the Republicans.”

Which is, Bush-leaguer Starr notwithstanding, exactly where it belongs.