

White House hits Brits in media 'food chain' report

by Edward Spannaus

Judging by the reaction of most of the news media—both British and American—the White House hit the nail right on the head, with the release of its explosive 331-page report documenting the “media food chain” and the central role played by the British press in orchestrating news media attacks on the President.

The report, “Communication Stream of Conspiracy Commerce,” was released on Jan. 6 by the White House Office of Legal Counsel, but had been distributed to inquiring reporters since the summer of 1995 (see *Documentation*).

Virtually all of the media flagrantly lied about what the report actually said. It was almost universally reported that the White House had charged that there was a “right-wing conspiracy” to plant stories in the news media—but the White House never said there was a “conspiracy.” What the White House described and documented—quite accurately—was a “mode” or “stream of communication” by which conspiracy-theory stories are circulated in right-wing newsletters and publications, and how they are then picked up by British tabloids, and then by the more “mainstream” media; or, they go on the Internet, and are then grabbed by the right-of-center “mainstream” U.S. media.

Anybody who has been following these matters for the past few years knows that this is an accurate depiction of how it works. But the *Washington Post*, for example, ran a front-page headline on Jan. 10 which read: “White House Asserts a Scandal Theory: Memo Concludes Negative Stories Arise from Right-Wing ‘Conspiracy.’” The *Post*’s putting “conspiracy” in quotation marks reinforces the impression that the White House was alleging a “right-wing conspiracy”—but even the article under the headline couldn’t come up with any support for the headline, because there isn’t any.

Then, when President Clinton and his spokesman told

reporters that they were not charging that there was a conspiracy, the fakers of the Washington press corps claimed that the President had backed down. “White House Beats Conspiracy Retreat,” was the *Washington Times* headline.

Ironically, in May 1994, the *Washington Post* itself had run a feature on the British press, headlined “Brits Keep Tabs on Clinton Sex Life: London Papers Trumpet Tawdry Allegations About the President,” which not only highlighted the role of Ambrose Evans-Pritchard and his *Sunday Telegraph*, but commented: “Some of what appears in London soon echoes back across the Atlantic. The *Wall Street Journal* editorial page and the *Washington Times* have repeated some of the *Sunday Telegraph*’s allegations.” Ah, but that was then, and this is now.

The Sunday Telegraph and its defenders

The loudest to scream about the White House report, were those whose dirty role was highlighted in it.

For example, the *Washington Times*, on Jan. 9, featured a front-page story, complete with its own flow chart, and equated the White House report with Richard Nixon’s enemies list: “Past administrations have grumbled about being beset by angry and even evil reporters, but the Clinton administration is the first since the Nixon administration to lay out a theory, documented with hundreds of pages of citations and clippings that add up to something that resembles an enemies list.”

Ever loyal to Mother England, the *Washington Times* story took umbrage at the characterization of the *Sunday Telegraph* as a “tabloid,” referring to it, instead, as “one of the two or three most influential ‘quality’ newspapers in Britain.” The *Washington Times* also quoted the *Sunday Telegraph*’s Ambrose Evans-Pritchard characterizing the White House re-

port as “pretty juvenile.” “For the report to be funded by the taxpayers and out of the White House counsel’s office is shocking,” Pritchard sputtered. “It raises questions about the education and moral character of these people.”

Evans-Pritchard had the opportunity to respond directly in the Jan. 12 *Sunday Telegraph*, in which he wailed, “Why is Clinton persecuting me?” Evans-Pritchard defended his own lying articles, and accused the Clinton White House of being worse than Richard Nixon’s in running a “smear campaign against journalists and political opponents.”

Pritchard complained that most of what the White House report says about him “is either untrue or misrepresented to the point of defamation.” He took issue with being charged with “promoting the allegation that the late Vincent Foster, a White House aide, was a spy”—although Evans-Pritchard in fact has shamelessly promoted every nut-case theory about Foster over the past three years.

Evans-Pritchard also attacked the White House’s description of the media “food chain,” in which, as he put it, a putative right-wing cabal led by Richard Mellon Scaife, “skillfully feeds material to London newspapers.” Pritchard quoted White House spokesman Mike McCurry as saying: “The stories get picked up overseas, typically in London, typically by one particular reporter.” McCurry didn’t name “the scoundrel,” Evans-Pritchard mockingly wrote, but he acknowledged: “They are, of course, referring to me.”

“From London,” Evans-Pritchard continued, “according to . . . this astonishing report . . . these wild inventions then make their way back across the Atlantic through a network of right-wing conduits, ultimately reaching the mainstream U.S. media. This is known as the ‘blow-back’ strategy.”

“What seems to cause intense frustration at the White House,” Evans-Pritchard bragged, “is the emergence of a new mass media that does not respond to the usual levers of control. A foreign newspaper such as the *Sunday Telegraph* can run stories that are picked up by the Internet and transmitted instantly across America.

“The radio talk shows—predominantly right-wing—then provide broader amplification, ensuring that the stories reach 10, 20, 30 million people. The White House is clearly alert to the dangers posed by this *samizdat* network, but has not figured out a way to jam the transmissions.”

The Paula Jones case

It was particularly appropriate, if not ironic, that the White House report was drawing such attention just as the Paula Jones “sexual harassment” case was about to be argued in the U.S. Supreme Court. One of the seven documented examples of what the White House report called the “blow-back” strategy (stories planted in the British press, and then reported in the U.S. press) was that of the Paula Jones story.

What the White House report documents, is that after Jones’s original Feb. 11, 1994 press conference in Washington, the story died down until it was “resurrected” by the

London *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Telegraph* in late March, and was then pumped into the right-wing and TV-evangelist and radio talk-show circuit.

That’s not the half of it, though, as Evans-Pritchard’s subsequent articles in May 1994 issues of the *Sunday Telegraph* showed. As readers of *EIR* know, on May 1, 1994, Evans-Pritchard sneered at the U.S. press for refusing to cover the Paula Jones story, and he predicted that Jones was about to file her lawsuit against President Clinton.

A week later, on May 8, Pritchard boasted that he was assisting in orchestrating the lawsuit. He admitted having had “a dozen conversations with Mrs. Jones over the past two months.” He further confessed that he was present at a strategy meeting on a boat on the Arkansas River with Jones’s lawyer.

The next week, Evans-Pritchard admitted that the actual aim of the Jones suit is to destabilize the Presidency. It doesn’t “matter all that much whether Mrs. Jones ultimately wins or loses her case,” he wrote on May 15. “The ticking time bomb in the lawsuit lies elsewhere,” he gloated, revealing that “the political purpose of the Jones lawsuit is to reconstruct the inner history of the Arkansas Governor’s Mansion, using the legal power of discovery. In effect, the two lawyers and their staff could soon be doing the job that the American media failed to do during the election campaign and have largely failed to do since.”

Even though the Jones suit is a patent fraud, it nevertheless raises important constitutional issues which must be treated seriously. In an interview with this news service in May 1994, Lyndon LaRouche offered his own proposal for how to deal with such a lawsuit against a sitting President. LaRouche said that, in general, he would not wish to have the Presidency tied up “with a scurrilous lawsuit of this type.” But, he pointed out that there is a flaw in the argument that a litigant should have to wait until the President’s term of office is finished. If the litigant has an honest case, forcing a litigant to wait period of years could impair the rights of the litigant.

So what LaRouche proposed, is that there should be some special rules for such a case, to give the President “a fair shake,” both as a person and as the President. The first thing to do, therefore, would be to require that Jones submit to a preliminary deposition, and that “she should be compelled to show that her collaboration with Ambrose Evans-Pritchard did not produce a lawsuit which is clearly politically motivated to destabilize the Presidency.”

If it turns out to be the case, that Jones wouldn’t have filed the suit without the instigation of Evans-Pritchard, said LaRouche, then “there are grounds for a summary dismissal or suspension of the suit, and I don’t think the woman has any claims coming to her. . . . If she’s got a claim, she can wait until the President is through with his business in office. Because she would not have made the suit at this time, but for foreign intelligence instigation.”

From the White House report on the media

The following are excerpts from a 331-page report, "Communication Stream of Conspiracy Commerce," released by the White House Office of Legal Affairs on Jan. 6:

Overview

Communication stream of conspiracy commerce: The "Communication Stream of Conspiracy Commerce" refers to the mode of communication employed by the right wing to convey their fringe stories into legitimate subjects of coverage by the mainstream media. This is how the stream works. First, well-funded right-wing think-tanks and individuals underwrite conservative newsletters and newspapers such as the *Western Journalism Center*, the *American Spectator*, and the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*. Next, the stories are reprinted on the internet where they are bounced all over the world. From the internet, the stories are bounced into the mainstream media through one of two ways: 1) The story will be picked up by the British tabloids and covered as a major story, from which the American right-of-center mainstream media (i.e., the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Times*, and *New York Post*) will then pick the story up; or 2) the story will be bounced directly from the internet to the right-of-center mainstream American media. After the mainstream right-of-center American media cover the story, Congressional committees will look into the story. After Congress looks into the story, the story now has the legitimacy to be covered by the remainder of the American mainstream press as a "real" story.

Background reading: The emergence of conservative think-tanks and their effectiveness at conveying conservative ideas has been discussed by a number of publications. The think-tanks serve as the ideas mill for today's Republican Party. The think-tanks define and shape the idea's agenda for the party and serve as the training ground for this new generation of conservatives. In many ways, these Republican think-tanks are to today's media age of political organizations what the Democratic big city party machines were to the New Deal era of political organizations.

Richard Mellon Scaife: Richard Mellon Scaife is in the vanguard of this aforementioned form of this media-age political organizing. Scaife uses the \$800 million Mellon fortune which he inherited to fund a virtual empire of right-wing newspapers and foundations. These newspapers and foundations, in turn, propagate Scaife's extremist views. Scaife, along with a handful of other wealthy individuals

and foundations, use their power to control the Republican Party's agenda and viewpoints. Scaife, in particular, is one of the major backers of Newt Gingrich. Interestingly enough, Gingrich's view on Vince Foster seemed to dovetail with Scaife's, following Scaife's pumping of thousands of dollars into Gingrich's GOPAC's coffers.

The Helen Dickey example: The Helen Dickey story is a classic example of how these right-wing foundations and newsletters can use the Communication Stream of Conspiracy Commerce to get a fringe story into the mainstream. In this case, the right-wing British tabloid reporter Ambrose Evans-Pritchard reported in London's *Sunday Telegraph* that an Arkansas State Trooper, Roger Perry, had talked with White House staffer Helen Dickey about . . . Vince Foster's death, hours before his death was suppose [sic] to have become known. From Pritchard, the story received major coverage by the Scaife-funded *Western Journalism Center* and the Scaife-owned *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. From these fringe, right-wing publications the story went on the internet, which reproduced the story for a far wider audience. From the internet, right-of-center mainstream papers, including the *Washington Times* and *New York Post*, covered the Dickey story as a legitimate news item. Once these papers covered the story, Congressional staffers from Alfonse D'Amato's staff had the needed justification to investigate the issue. In turn, the investigation of the issue gave the story further credibility and allowed other members of the mainstream media to cover the story.

The Foster forgery note example: In late October, James Davidson and the organization which he is president of, the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), sponsored a press conference purporting to show that the Foster suicide note was a forgery. The press conference and the report of the forged suicide note was covered by the mainstream media. However, a closer look at the situation shows how fantasy can become fact when it is in the hands of the right-wing Foster conspiracy industry. NTU and Davidson relied upon Ronald Rice, a self-described handwriting expert. In fact, Rice is not a handwriting expert with the Massachusetts Attorney Generals Office but, in fact, the head of a hypnotist training school in Boston. As for Davidson and NTU, they are known for their conservative views and ties. Over the last two years, Davidson's NTU has been publishing Foster conspiracy industry stories. Furthermore, NTU received a large chunk of its funding from Richard Mellon Scaife. Finally, the Independent Counsel's report, based on the FBI's findings, has concluded that the Foster note was the real thing. Despite all of these facts, the mainstream press covered the press conference as if it was a legitimate story. . . .

Who's behind all this?

In order to fully understand the Whitewater story, it is important to understand how conservative groups are, and

have been, able to generate a media frenzy over the Whitewater story.

The 'media food chain'

The media food chain is the system by which right-wing activists feed conspiracy theories and innuendo from the fringes into the mainstream media. The "food chain" starts with activists such as Willie Horton creator Floyd Brown, Sheffield Nelson, and Larry Nichols. These activists feed the partisan conservative press, publications such as the *American Spectator*, the *Washington Times*, and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. The mainstream press then picks up on these reports.

The 'blow-back' strategy

One specific "food chain" strategy is the "blow-back." The blow-back starts with conservative groups feeding material to the British tabloids, such as the *Sunday Telegraph*. Conservative American tabloids and mainstream American media then report on the British reports.

For example, recently the *Washington Times* reprinted Ambrose Evans-Pritchard's *Sunday Telegraph* response to a *Washington Post* article on Vince Foster conspiracy theorists. Pritchard, who took offense to being lumped in with conspiracy theorists, has been a leading reporter of various conspiracies—most recently accusing Vince Foster of secretly being a spy. (*Washington Times*, 7/10/95 and *Washington Post*, 7/4/95)

The Richard Scaife connection

In addition to use of the media food chain and blow-back strategies, conservatives have another tie—their source of funds. A number of groups that have been peddling conspiracy theories (mainly questioning the suicide of Deputy White House counsel Vince Foster) are funded by Richard M. Scaife.

Richard Scaife is an heir to the Mellon fortune, with an estimated net worth of \$750 million. In addition to his financial support of purveyors of Vince Foster conspiracy theories, Scaife also is a Newt Gingrich insider—backing many of the groups that support and defend Newt Gingrich, including contributing \$60,000 to GOPAC and \$450,000 to the Landmark Legal Foundation.

Sources without credibility pushing stories into mainstream press

Whitewater is one of many issues originating with sources without credibility. There is a discernible pattern in which Willie Horton creator Floyd Brown and tabloid "news" organizations have forced stories into the mainstream press. Most interesting is the "blow-back" strategy in which stories are planted in the British tabloids and then those stories are reported on in the U.S. press.

Whitewater: from Floyd Brown to Wall Street Journal [The report gives six examples, documenting with dates and site of publication, the flow of stories.]

Gennifer Flowers: the 'blow-back' strategy

A search of an electronic database revealed that five out of the first seven newspaper articles about Gennifer Flowers's allegations of an extramarital affair with Bill Clinton were found in British newspapers. The *Star* tabloid broke their story on Jan. 23, 1992. There were 29 stories about the Flowers allegations the next day in the mainstream press.

Sally Perdue: blow-back from British tabloids to Washington Times to ???

In January 1994, the British press tried to resurrect the story of Sally Perdue, and the *Washington Times* followed suit. [The report documents stories in *Sunday Telegraph*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, and the *Times* of London, and then outlines how the "*Washington Times* followed British press."]]

British tabloids' blow-back rehashed Beverly story

A *Washington Times* story from September 1993 was successfully resurrected in the British tabloids in 1994.

Paula Jones: blow-back—from British tabloids to mainstream media

The March headlines in the British press were a sign of things to come. [The report documents how this story began in the *Washington Times*, was resurrected six weeks later in London *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Telegraph*, then brought back into U.S. media such as the Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell shows and Rush Limbaugh, and was then covered in the "mainstream" media.]]

Spectator gives 'scoop' to British tabloid

The right-wing *American Spectator* magazine gave a special "scoop" to its ally in the British tabloid press, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard of the *Telegraph*. Evans-Pritchard, the *Telegraph's* Washington correspondent, is typically the first British reporter called in on the "blow-back." [The White House report documents that the London *Sunday Telegraph* ran an article on an *American Spectator* piece, entitled "Love and Hate in Arkansas," before it was released in the United States. The article was then reported in the *Washington Post*.]

Dennis Patrick—blow-back from tabloids to Washington Times to Wall Street Journal

The British tabloids focused on an *Economist* story about a man named Dennis Patrick which eventually found its way into the *Wall Street Journal* by way of the *Washington Times* and Pat Robertson's "700 Club." [The report documents the flow of stories from the London *Economist*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and the *Times* of London into the *Washington Times*, which was then picked up by Sen. Al D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and more U.S. media.]]

British tabloid telegraphs the next attack

On July 17, 1994, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard of the British tabloid the *Sunday Telegraph*, wrote an article alleging a pattern of drug use by Bill Clinton during the 1970s and early 1980s under the headline, "Clinton 'Took Cocaine While in Office.'"]