

# Bill's Secret Police Strike Again

**T**HE White House secret police have struck again. Desperate to discredit Linda Tripp, President Clinton's most damning accuser, the president's men are most likely the ones who delved into confidential Pentagon files to dig up and dish out dirt on Tripp.

It was probably White House secret police operatives who visited courthouses to unearth records of Tripp's arrest (later expunged) on burglary charges when she was 19 and then ransacked Pentagon personnel files to show that Tripp had denied ever having been arrested.

Just because Tripp is everyone's worst nightmare, she is not and should not be exempt from the Privacy Act and the protections given to all other federal employees. She should not have to read her confidential personnel file in the newspapers.

Who but the White House could have done it? Round up the usual suspects. Kenneth Starr? Why discredit his own witness? Monica Lewinsky? How could her legal team get access to secret files? Some reporter? None could get those files unless someone obligingly unlocked the door.

That leaves the White House.

But no journalist questioned how Tripp's confidential file ended up in *The New Yorker*. Instead, all the papers dutifully reported on her arrest and her lack of candor in disclosing it. But let's put the sins in comparative perspective. What is more reprehensible, more dangerous to our liberties? A junior Pentagon employee who omits mention of an arrest decades ago which resulted in no conviction and which was expunged, or the release of secret Pentagon files by unnamed operatives in an effort to discredit one of the president's adversaries?

Defense Secretary William Cohen was not alarmed at the leak of his secret files, but sanctimoniously denounced the "seriousness" of Tripp's omission on her job-application form.

Today's Linda Tripp was yesterday's Daniel Ellsberg and could be tomorrow's you and me. Constitutional and statutory protections of privacy are for all of us. If we define freedom of speech as freedom to say things we hate the most, then privacy protections should shelter the people we dislike the most. Linda Tripp qualifies admirably.

## DICK MORRIS



The release of the Tripp file lends a new credibility to the Republican allegations that the White House's possession of confidential FBI files on GOP leaders and potential adversaries was no "mistake," as the president's men piously claimed. Is Linda Tripp the latest victim of a file dump?

The fire sale on confidential Pentagon records continued with yesterday's story in *Newsweek* that Lewinsky attorney William Ginsburg lied when he said he had been a captain in the Army (he had only been a lieutenant). Could the White House have leaked this file too? Who has an interest in intimidating Ginsburg to control Lewinsky's testimony?

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This mounting evidence of a secret police at the White House's beck and call, with access to secret government files, must be disturbing to friends and foes of the president. The Clinton operation's use of private investigators began in 1992 when over \$100,000 of federally subsidized campaign funds were used to pay sleuth Jack Palladino to investigate women rumored to have had affairs with Clinton. His mission? To intimidate them into silence.

Was Palladino the one who visited the courthouses to discredit Tripp? He refused to either confirm or deny to *The Washington Post* whether he is still digging up dirt for Clinton's operatives. Was it Sydney Blumenthal who gave the Tripp files to *The New Yorker*? Blumenthal worked for that magazine before he joined the White House staff last year.

Terry Lenzner, another Clinton detective, was reportedly hired in 1992 to spy

on former Gov. Mario Cuomo. The campaign or the party also hired Lenzner in 1996 for as yet unrevealed investigative work. He now serves the needs of the Clinton legal defense team. In between Lenzner won a no-bid contract, worth several hundred thousand dollars, to train police in Haiti.

The White House secret police also tried to intimidate Dolly Kyle Browning whose relationship with Clinton started in their teen-age years. According to her affidavit, Clinton confidante Bruce Lindsay sent Browning a message to warn her about her deposition. Browning describes how Lindsay offered her a "deal" where he would not release damaging information about her if she obliged by remaining silent about her relationship with the president. Browning says she also received a motion to quash the Jones subpoena and an affidavit denying any sexual relationship with Clinton, both awaiting only her signature, helpfully prepared by Clinton's attorneys. Sound familiar?

The Clinton Legal Aid Society also provided Monica Lewinsky with a motion to quash and an affidavit denying sex. Linda Tripp got talking points, through Monica Lewinsky, on how to prepare an affidavit to call Kathleen Willey a liar.

The bad cops intimidate witnesses and Vernon Jordan, the good cop, finds them jobs. The most recent beneficiary of the Jordan Job Corps may have been David Watkins, former director of administration for the White House. Watkins, whose memorandum on the Travel Office firings embarrassed the White House and suggested extensive involvement by the First Lady, got a job with the Callaway Golf Co., where Vernon Jordan serves on the board. The Jordan Job Corps has now found employment for Monica Lewinsky, Webb Hubbell, and possibly, Watkins. The job corps is a new addition to the White House employee retirement plan.

These seedy, seamy tactics turn one's stomach. They are not Bill Clinton's style and remind one of Nixon at his worst. The president needs to call off his dogs and stop the release of confidential security information to intimidate witnesses.

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