



THE HUMANIST SOCIETY OF GAINESVILLE



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## Enron's Generosity to Polical Campaigns

Mark Mayfield (Letter to Gainesville Sun)

Public officials should not use public funds as pay-backs for super-sized corporate contributors. The practice is bipartisan, but as the Enron/Arthur Andersen scandals show, the Bush administration has perfected the art.

Enron and its CEO Ken Lay donated \$113,800 to Bush's campaign and \$888,265 to the Republican National Committee, an arm of the campaign (Center for Responsive Politics). Enron's accounting firm, Arthur Andersen, was Bush's fifth largest contributor, giving \$146,000 through its PAC and employees (Associated Press, 01/16/02).

What does such "generosity" buy? Houston Industries' executive Stephen Naeve said, "clout and the ability to get the rules written their way." Enron has not paid taxes 4 out of the last 5 years. Under Bush's "stimulus" plan, Enron would get \$254 million in rebates. Lawrence Lindsey, Bush's economic adviser in 2000, was a paid consultant to Enron. Lindsey incorporated Lay's ideas into the Bush campaign's energy policy.

Enron representatives consulted top officials on policy matters --including the Commerce Secretary, Treasury Secretary and Vice President (Washington Post, 01/18/02). Vice President Cheney lobbied an official of India on Enron's behalf over a \$64 million dispute (Baltimore Sun, 01/19/02). The White House acknowledged six meetings between Enron representatives and Cheney's energy task force but refused to tell the GAO whom Cheney met with. The GAO may sue the White House for the information.

From the few documents released, Rep. Henry

Waxman found 17 policies in the White House's May 2001 energy plan, including the India provision, that were either advocated by Enron or benefited Enron. Waxman said in a letter to Cheney that it appeared the India provision had been missing from the draft energy policy proposal circulated by the State Department during an interagency review in March 2001.

"Instead, the provision appears to have been added to the plan during the period in which the White House directly controlled the drafting," Waxman wrote (Reuters, 1/26/02).

According to The Nation, Enron's lobbyists pushed for California power deregulation, which contributed to an energy crisis costing Californians about \$50 billion. Led by Lindsey, the White House resisted price controls as a solution, and Enron revenues increased by \$70 billion. After price controls were enacted, the "crisis" disappeared.

CEO Ken Lay was on Bush's transition-advisory team for the Energy Department. Enron's Cynthia Sandherr was on the team for the Commerce Department. Bush advisor Karl Rove participated in energy policy meetings while holding Enron stock (six-figures worth). The Bush campaign even used Enron's corporate jets.

Destruction of confidential documents went on at Enron until at least two weeks ago (Reuters, 1/21/02). Then there's Arthur Andersen, which certified Enron's inaccurate audit reports. After learning about the Enron investigation, an Andersen partner ordered the destruction of documents (New York Times, 1/15/02). Ander-

**MEETING: 7:30 p.m., Monday, March 11, 2002**

## **Former Mayor-Commissioner Mac McEachern Gainesville City Commission from 1981 to 1987**

**Mr. McEachern will discuss local politics and the upcoming election**

◆ This month's meeting will be held in the Board Room at SFCC Downtown Campus ◆

sen fired that partner and put three high-level employees on “administrative leave” (ABC News, 1/15/02). Heads have rolled, but Enron was not Andersen’s only scandal.

The now-bankrupt Baptist Federation of Arizona was Andersen’s client. The firm also faced two civil fraud complaints: in one, Andersen agreed to pay \$110 million to Sunbeam stockholders; in the other, Andersen settled for \$457 million “over misleading investors about the company’s financial health”(Baptist Standard, 12/03/01).

Many members of congressional committees involved in the Enron probe received big contributions from Enron and Anderson, including 49 of the 70 House Financial Services Committee members, and 51 of the 56 House Energy and Commerce Committee members (Los Angeles Times, 01/20/02). Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Billy Tauzin (R-LA) received \$47,000 from Andersen.

Tauzin helped Andersen fight a proposed SEC rule to bar accounting firms from both auditing and consulting for the same company. The rule was meant to protect the integrity of audits. Andersen played that dual role for Enron for \$52 million in fees, which likely contributed to Enron’s collapse. Harvey Pitt (Bush’s SEC Chairman and former attorney for Andersen) supported the firm’s position.

Closer to home, Enron’s collapse cost Florida’s state pension fund \$300 million. Andersen’s Houston office and Enron’s Ken Lay contributed to Jeb Bush’s 1998 gubernatorial campaign.

According to Common Cause, Enron also paid \$4 million to Andersen Consulting, now known as “Accenture,” the firm that Secretary of State Katherine Harris hired to help with Florida’s new voter purges (St. Pete Times, 12/02/01). State records show that during her Secretary of State campaign, Harris received one contribution from an Andersen Consulting employee and two directly from Enron.

President Bush has played down his ties to Ken Lay, saying that Lay had supported Bush’s opponent, Ann Richards, in his 1994 run for Governor of Texas. Actually, in 1994, Bush received \$47,500 from Lay and his wife -- many times what Richards received (Washington Post). Lay said that in 1994 he had supported Bush, not Richards. The Director of Texans for Public Justice said that Bush “was in bed with Enron before he ever held a political office.”

Enron’s and Andersen’s tentacles reach even further. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld held Enron stocks. Bush’s Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge had Enron ties: when Ridge was governor of Pennsylvania, Bush intervened to help Enron enter that state’s market. Even US Attorney General John Ashcroft received Enron and Andersen campaign contributions but has recused himself from the investigations (Center for Public Integrity, 01/16/02).

Can we count on the numerous other officials who welcomed Enron/Andersen money to properly conduct the investigations? Does the phrase “conflict of interest” mean anything? ●

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## “Thank You, Mr. Jefferson”

**January 1, 2002 marks the 200th Anniversary of Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptists** in which he first proclaimed “a wall of separation between Church and State.” Since then, the U.S. Supreme Court has adopted the phrase to plainly describe the First Amendment’s establishment clause which prohibits government from preferring or supporting one particular religion over other religions, or religion over non-religion. It is this simple, yet brilliant concept that has kept this country free of religious warfare for two centuries. America is a shining example of how religious diversity helps keep the peace.

After the events of September 11, we should all take great pride that our country allows people of over 2,000 different faiths, and those of no faith, to live, work and enjoy this land as equals. We do not live in a

theocracy where dissent from the established orthodoxy is outlawed or those who “blaspheme” are executed. We can live our lives according to the dictates of our conscience and not be imprisoned or harassed because of our beliefs.

America is a strong, diverse and vibrant country. People flock to her shores from all over the world with hope for a better life full of freedom and boundless possibilities. These people do not flock to Afghanistan, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, or even England. Those countries have an established state religion or endless religious strife that inhibits freedom. Despite the best efforts of some, America remains officially religion-neutral. Separating church from state has, in large part, been the key to success, protecting personal liberties and preserving freedom of conscience in our republic.

After all your New Year's partying and football-watching, take a moment to reflect on Thomas Jefferson's words, "Believing . . . that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State." If you enjoy living in this great country, you might even want to say, "Thank you, Mr. Jefferson."

Mark Mayfield - Letter to the Gainesville Sun

### Richard Nixon and Billy Graham record views in 1977 meeting

Rev. Billy Graham openly voiced a belief that Jews control the American media, calling it a "stranglehold" during a 1972 conversation with President Richard Nixon, according to a tape of the Oval Office meeting released Thursday by the National Archives.

"This stranglehold has got to be broken or the country's going down the drain," the nation's best-known preacher declared as he agreed with a stream of bigoted Nixon comments about Jews and their perceived influence in American life.

"You believe that?" Nixon says after the "stranglehold" comment.

"Yes, sir," Graham says.

"Oh, boy," replies Nixon. "So do I. I can't ever say that but I believe it."

"No, but if you get elected a second time, then we might be able to do something," Graham replies.

Later, Graham mentions that he has friends in the media who are Jewish, saying they "swarm around me and are friendly to me." But, he confides to Nixon, "They don't know how I really feel about what they're doing to this country."

The newly released tapes cover the first six months of 1972, with the Vietnam War and the upcoming presidential campaign the backdrops for many conversations. The tapes touch subjects as varied as using a nuclear bomb on North Vietnam--a notion quickly derided by adviser Henry Kissinger--and settling a West Coast dock strike.

They also include all of the famous "smoking gun" conversation about the Watergate break-in, known for its damaging disclosures about a cover-up and its 181/2-minute gap.

The Nixon-Graham remarks came during a 90-minute session after a prayer breakfast the men attended on Feb. 1, 1972.

Scholars surprised

"I find this rather stunning," said William Martin, a professor of religion and sociology at Rice University in Houston and author of "A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story."

"This is out of character with anything else I have heard Billy Graham say or be quoted as saying. It is disappointing," Martin said.

"What Graham said that day is inexcusable. Did it ever occur to him that he should have countered the president?" said Martin Marty, a religious historian at the University of Chicago who noted the distinction some conservative evangelicals and Pentecostals have made between supporting Israel but not American Jews.

"One really did not associate him with this," said Michael Kotzin, a

## Venom

Choking on the words,  
gagged by your sword.  
Blinded by the myth,  
can you see nothing more?  
Every lie you can twist,  
bend the words to fit the story.  
Trading fact for fiction,  
you believe you'll find glory.

Enlightened by the darkness,  
can't you see it's just a lie?  
You exchange life for death,  
you never even question why.

Dividing the humanity,  
keeping pace, you're not a saint.  
It adds up to insanity,  
you have no one left to blame.

Refusing proof, you're addicted,  
it's not truth, it's just a hope.  
To read what you preach,  
it rips apart at my throat.

Illona Brandon

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vice president at the Jewish United Fund in Chicago. "Rather than try to direct Nixon in a different direction, he reinforces him and eggs him on when it came to these stereotypes, and that's troubling."

Graham, 83, is not in good health and indicated, through spokesman Larry Ross, that he could not respond because he did not recall the conversation.

Thursday's release of 426 hours brings to about 2,600, out of a total of 3,700, the hours of recordings either publicly disclosed or returned to the Nixon family because they were deemed strictly personal. Many recordings, including the Graham tape, are edited to exclude content believed to disclose national security information, constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy or reveal trade secrets, among other matters.

Previous tapes have underscored the complexity of Nixon, including his insecurity and occasional nastiness. Apologists tend to cite his fits of bigotry as ancillary to his policy achievements, with the Nixon estate claiming that his harshness was often a display of faux machismo in the presence of H.R. Haldeman or his other top aide, John Erlichman.

While other prominent figures, such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, then a Nixon aide, can also be heard on tapes during mean-spirited discourses by Nixon, many assumed a more passive role. Graham is unusual for being a distinguished outsider actively taking part.



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Graham and Nixon had become close friends during the Eisenhower administration, when Nixon was vice president. The friendship remained strong until Nixon was brought down by the Watergate scandal and resigned the presidency in August 1974.

Haldeman's diaries noted the conversation. He wrote that there was discussion "of the terrible problem arising from the total Jewish domination of the media, and agreement that this was something that would have to be dealt with."

He continues, "Graham has the strong feeling that the Bible says there are satanic Jews and there's where our problem arises." No such comments about the Bible are found on the tape released Thursday but, because it contains several long deletions, it's believed such remarks were excised.

The lengthy chat opens with Graham praising Nixon's prayer breakfast remarks. "There were a lot of people in tears when you finished this morning and it's very moving. That's the best I've heard you at one of those breakfast things."

After offering Nixon tips on preparing himself for big speeches, as well as strategy for his re-election campaign, Graham notes that he has been invited to lunch with editors of Time magazine. "I was quite amazed since this is the first time I've heard from Time since [Time founder] Henry Luce died."

"You meet with all their editors, you better take your Jewish beanie," Haldeman says.

Graham laughs. "Is that right? I don't know any of them now."

Hollywood and the media

Nixon then broaches a subject about which "we can't talk about it publicly," namely Jewish influence in Hollywood and the media. He cites Paul Keyes, a political conservative who is executive producer of the NBC hit, "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In," as telling him that "11 of the 12 writers are Jewish."

"That right?" says Graham, prompting Nixon to claim that Life magazine, Newsweek, The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and others, are "totally dominated by the Jews." He calls network TV anchors Howard K. Smith, David Brinkley and Walter Cronkite "front men who may not be of that persuasion," but that their writers are "95 percent Jewish."

Nixon demurs that this does not mean "that all the Jews are bad" but that most are left-wing radicals who want "peace at any price except where support for Israel is concerned. The best Jews are actually the Israeli Jews."

"That's right," agrees Graham, who later concurs with a Nixon assertion that a "powerful bloc" of Jews confronts Nixon in the media. "And they're the ones putting out the pornographic stuff," Graham adds.

Nixon contends that "every Democratic candidate will owe his election to Jewish people," but he won't.

Haldeman turns the subject to the White House press corps and the Gridiron Club, a bastion of the media establishment, both of which they say were mostly WASP once, but no more.

"It was the Merriman Smiths, the Dick Wilsons, the [James] Kilpatricks, all that kind of people. But you look at what covers the president today and it's really kind of scary," Haldeman says. Haldeman and Nixon cite by name reporters from the Los Angeles Times (David Kraslow), New York Times (Max Frankel), Washington Post (Stanley Karnow) and NBC (Herb Kaplow) but stumble on CBS.

"From CBS, Rather, Dan Rather, is Rather?" says Haldeman. A deletion then follows with the next voice heard being that of Graham, who alludes to A.M. Rosenthal, managing editor of The New York Times.

"But I have to lean a little bit, you know. I go and see friend of Mr. Rosenthal at The New York Times, and people of that sort. And all, I don't mean all the Jews, but a lot of the Jews are great friends of mine. They swarm around me and are friendly to me. Because they know I am friendly to Israel and so forth. They don't know how I really feel about what they're doing to this country."

Nixon says, "You must not let them know."

The conversation turns to religious magazines, postal rates and Nixon's uncharitable thoughts on certain Cabinet members. Graham then leaves and, a few minutes later, Nixon tells Haldeman, "You know it was good we got this point about the Jews across."

"It's a shocking point," says Haldeman, a frequent cheerleader during Nixon's diatribes.

"Well," says Nixon, "it's also, the Jews are irreligious, atheistic, immoral bunch of bastards."

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