

Bush's New US Attorney a Criminal?

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BBC Television had exposed 2004 voter attack scheme by appointee Griffin, a Rove aide. Black soldiers and the homeless targeted.

by *Greg Palast*

There's only one thing worse than sacking an honest prosecutor. That's replacing an honest prosecutor with a criminal.

There was one big hoohah in Washington yesterday as House Judiciary Chairman John Conyers pulled down the pants on George Bush's firing of US Attorneys to expose a scheme to punish prosecutors who wouldn't bend to political pressure.

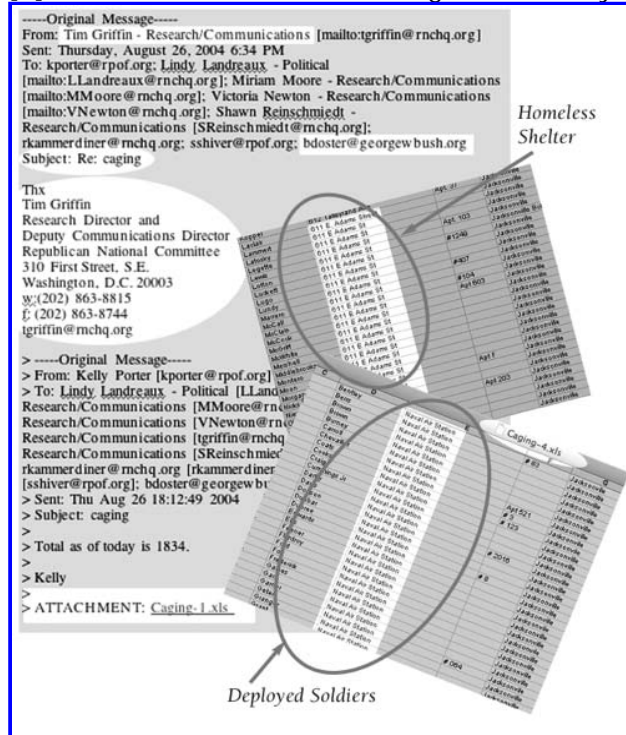
[1] But the Committee missed a big one: Timothy Griffin, Karl Rove's assistant, the President's pick as US

Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas. Griffin, according to BBC Television, was the hidden hand behind a scheme to wipe out the voting rights of 70,000 citizens prior to the 2004 election.

Key voters on Griffin's hit list: Black soldiers and homeless men and women. Nice guy, eh? Naughty or nice, however, is not the issue. Targeting voters where race is a factor is a felony crime under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In October 2004, our investigations team at BBC *Newsnight* received a series of astonishing emails from Mr. Griffin, then Research Director for the Republican National Committee. He didn't mean to send them to us. They were highly confidential memos meant only for RNC honchos.

However, Griffin made a wee mistake. Instead of sending the emails — potential evidence of a crime — to email addresses ending with the domain name "@GeorgeWBush.com" he sent them to "@GeorgeWBush.ORG." A website run by prankster John Wooden who owns "GeorgeWBush.org." When Wooden got the treasure trove of Rove-ian ravings, he sent them to us.



And we dug in, decoding, and mapping the voters on what Griffin called, "Caging" lists, spreadsheets with 70,000 names of voters marked for challenge. Overwhelmingly, these were Black and Hispanic voters from Democratic precincts.

[2] The Griffin scheme was sickly brilliant. We learned that the RNC sent first-class letters to new voters in minority precincts marked, "Do not forward." Several sheets contained nothing but soldiers, other sheets, homeless shelters. Targets included the Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida and that city's State Street Rescue Mission. Another target, Edward Waters College, a school for African-Americans.



If these voters were not currently at their home voting address, they were tagged as "suspect" and their registration wiped out or their ballot challenged and not counted. Of course, these 'cages' captured thousands of students, the homeless and those in the military though they are legitimate voters.

We telephoned those on the hit list, including one Randall Prausa. His wife admitted he wasn't living at his voting address: Randall was a soldier shipped overseas.

Randall and other soldiers like him who sent in absentee ballots, when challenged, would lose their vote. And they wouldn't even know it.

And by the way, it's not illegal for soldiers to vote from overseas — even if they're Black.

But it is illegal to challenge voters en masse where race is an element in the targeting. So several lawyers told us, including Ralph Neas, famed civil rights attorney with People for the American Way.

Griffin himself ducked our cameras, but his RNC team tried to sell us the notion that the caging sheets were, in fact, not illegal voter hit lists, but a roster of donors to the Bush-Cheney reelection campaign. Republican donors at homeless shelters?

Over the past weeks, Griffin has said he would step down if he had to face Congressional confirmation. However, the President appointed Griffin to the law enforcement post using an odd little provision of the USA Patriot Act that could allow Griffin to skip Congressional questioning altogether.

Therefore, I have a suggestion for Judiciary members. Voting law expert Neas will be testifying today before Conyers' Committee on the topic of illegal voter "disenfranchisement" — the fancy word for stealing elections by denying voters' civil rights.

Maybe Conyers should hold a line-up of suspected vote thieves and let Neas identify the perpetrators. That should be easy in the case of the Caging List Criminal. He'd only have to look for the guy wearing a new shiny lawman's badge.

Read the full story, "Caging Lists: Great White Republicans Take Voters Captive" in Greg Palast's [3] [Armed Madhouse](#): Sordid Secrets and Strange Tales from a White House Gone Wild. The new edition, with a new chapter on Theft of the Election, will be released April 24th (by Penguin/Plume in paperback).

Catch our original BBC Television story [4] [here](#) - on Palast's brand new YouTube [5] [channel](#)

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