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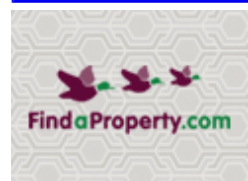


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# The picture that proves 'torture flights' are STILL landing in the UK

By GLEN OWEN - [More by this author »](#) Last updated at 09:07am on 10th June 2007

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The row over CIA 'torture flights' using British airports has deepened following fresh evidence that a plane repeatedly linked to the controversial programme landed in the UK just days ago.

The plane was logged arriving at RAF Mildenhall in Suffolk last weekend, and watching aviation experts said the aircraft, piloted by crew clad in desert fatigues, was immediately surrounded on the runway by armed American security forces.

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This flight was spotted landing at a UK airport - proof that 'rendition' flights are still taking place

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- [Torture is NEVER justified...and our spineless leaders must find the courage to tell that to Bush](#)

Its registration number, clearly visible on the fuselage, identifies it as a plane which the European Parliament says has been involved in 'ghost flights' to smuggle terrorist suspects to shadowy interrogation centres abroad.

Records show the plane is owned by Blackwater USA, a CIA contractor described as "the most secretive and powerful mercenary army on the planet". An eyewitness, who previously worked as an RAF electronic warfare expert, said that as the plane - a CASA-212 Aviocar - taxied to a stop on the runway it was met by a US military Humvee.

The vehicle contained four US security policemen armed with M16 assault rifles, who accompanied the camouflaged crew to the airport terminal.

The man, who did not want to be identified, added: "I thought it was curious that they would give a civilian plane an armed guard."

Another spotter, who took the picture of it landing, recorded it touching down at 4.36pm on Saturday.

The disclosure follows damning findings by the Council of Europe human rights organisation, which accused Tony Blair on Friday of colluding in a CIA operation to run secret prisons in Poland and Romania by allowing the agency to use UK airports.

The study was contradicted on the same day by a report from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which

concluded that there was no evidence to support the claims.

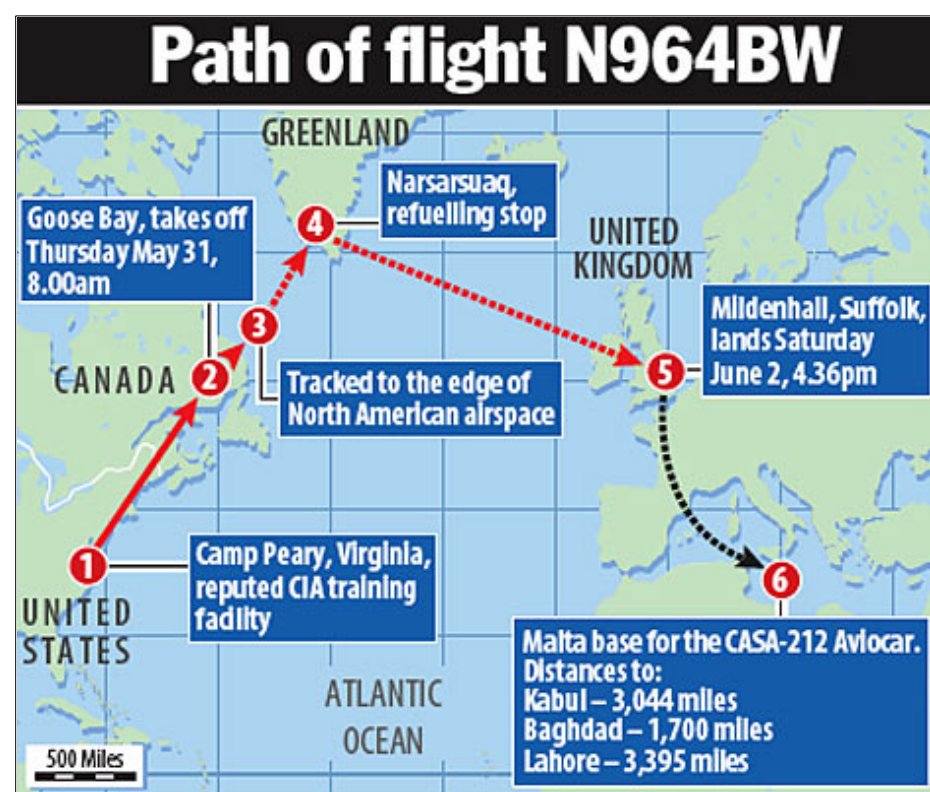
But the director of the human rights group Liberty revealed that ACPO had admitted it restricted its inquiry to a review of media reports on the issue.

She accused them of rushing out their 'cursory' findings as part of a politically-motivated 'spin' operation.

The US plane's arrival was also logged by Touchdown News, a group of enthusiasts who record the movements of military aircraft at RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath.

The group said the plane used its civilian call sign when talking to air traffic control and took off again early on the morning of Sunday June 3, flying east.

Scroll down for more...



The path that the 'torture flight' took

A report last November by a European Parliament committee placed the plane - registration number N964BW - on a list of "companies and aircraft used by the CIA for extraordinary rendition flights". The plane was previously registered with the Bolivian army, and has been pictured on the ground in the Afghan capital Kabul within the past year.

The American Federal Aviation Authority lists the plane as being operated by two companies, Aviation World Wide Services and a sister company, Presidential Airways.

The European Parliament report describes these as shell companies operating as subsidiaries of Blackwater USA, "an important contractor for the CIA and the US military" which bases the planes in Malta.

Research by a further group, The American Centre for Media and Democracy, claims that flight-tracking internet technology shows the plane landed at least twice in the first six months of 2006 at Camp Peary, the U.S. naval reservation in Virginia known as The Farm and widely alleged to be a CIA training facility.

Tracking technology shows that the plane was en route from Canada to Greenland two days before it was sighted at Mildenhall: the internet software does not extend beyond American airspace, but the expert explained that its route would be consistent with a refuelling stop in the Arctic - it only has a range of about 2,000 miles - followed by a further refuel in East Anglia, before heading to Malta.

From there it could 'leapfrog' from US bases in the the former Soviet states bordering Afghanistan on to Kabul.

A recent book on Blackwater by Jeremy Scahill, an American author, described the company as the world's "most secretive and powerful mercenary firm", carrying out quasi-military operations on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq, Afghanistan and within the U.S.

It was founded in 1997 by Erik Prince, a former elite Navy Seal and fundamentalist Christian millionaire who bankrolls far-Right causes.

This newspaper first cast doubt on the Government's claim to have no knowledge of the CIA's activities 18 months ago when we published pictures of three planes at Scottish airports which had been linked by human rights activists to rendition.



Erik Prince, founder of the Blackwater mercenary firm

Flight records showed the planes had been given landing rights by the MoD, despite there being no record of passenger lists or details of the purpose of the flights.

The Council of Europe dossier, compiled by Swiss senator Dick Marty, said the U.S. had used Britain's help to establish a "global spider's web" of jails and airports to pursue a war on terror without rules.

It claimed the secret centres had been set up so it could use interrogation techniques amounting to torture which are illegal in the US.

These include "waterboarding" – the dunking of blindfolded suspects so they believe they are drowning – solitary confinement, shackling in confined cells and exposure of naked captives to extremes of heat, cold and noise.

Separately, the Washington Post newspaper has reported that mercenaries working for Blackwater were at the centre of an infamous firefight in Iraq in April 2004 when guarding the U.S. headquarters in Najaf - despite never having applied to operate as a private security company in the country, The report said that in the battle, footage of which circulated on the internet, the troops had opened fire on Shia Iraqi civilians protesting outside, unleashing rounds so rapidly they had to pause every 15 minutes to allow their gun barrels to cool down.

In his book, Scahill claims that the Blackwater employees in the country are using "experimental ammunition' made of 'blended metal, which shatter on impact to create untreatable wounds".

Shami Chakrabati, the director of Liberty, alleges that 210 CIA flights carrying terrorist suspects for possible torture have entered Britain since 2001.

She called for a full investigation, claiming the ACPO probe was unsatisfactory.

"ACPO have admitted to me in a private letter that their investigation amounted to little more than a cursory review of reports on the issue – which they issued, 18 months after I requested it, to coincide with the Council of Europe's report," she said.

"Maybe now The Mail on Sunday has produced this photographic evidence they will conduct a proper inquiry."

An ACPO spokeswoman said: "These planes could be empty - there is no evidence that prisoners were on board."

She denied Liberty's claim that their inquiry had been limited and driven by spin.

"There has been a full examination to see if there was any evidence to suggest criminal activity, and there wasn't," she said.

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said: "We have been through the records, and there is no evidence of detainees being rendered through the UK since 1997."

No one at RAF Mildenhall was available for comment.

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**24 people have commented on this story so far. Tell us what you think below.**

Here's a sample of the latest comments published. You can click [view all](#) to read all comments that readers have sent in.

Of course there will be "no evidence" if you never ask the question. Never has the expression "don't ask, because you won't like the answer" been more appropriate.

**- Dave G, Basingstoke, UK**

I well remember the "cruise missiles do not enter the UK" statements in the 70's 80's when I was watching them land and reading memo's about their road convoys through Manchester.  
Good to see nothing's changed.

**- Ken Wyatt, Todmorden, West Yorkshire**

Protect the human rights of the citizens and not the perpetrators of terrorism and their supporters. I salute the US (and all others) for this and tackling the terrorists head on. Make them as scared of being caught as I am of their bombs.

**- Jason, London, UK**

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[Hired or fired? Who will win this series of The Apprentice?](#)

Millions will tune in tonight to see who wins a £100,000 job with Sir Alan Sugar in the final of The Apprentice. It has come down to the final two - posh public schoolboy Simon Ambrose and single-minded mum Kristina Grimes



### [Victoria Beckham: 'I'd live with David in a council flat'](#)

With millions in the bank, a famous husband and never-ending wardrobe, you might think Victoria Beckham would want for nothing. Think again



### [Perhaps it's a little too figure-hugging, Kate?](#)

Kate Winslet has always been proud of her curves, but perhaps squeezing herself into this black number was not the best way to show them off to the full. The figure-hugging dress gave the appearance that the British actress had gained a few pounds



### [I can't forgive my daughter for being gay](#)

'When I look back at the photos of Sarah as a little girl, I can't help but feel sad.' One mother and her gay daughter talk with utter frankness about the schism her sexuality has caused within their family



### [A Daddy's Girl wants a man who looks like her father](#)

When she wants more pocket money she turns her feminine charms on her father rather than her mother. Yet it seems that such preferences extend past childhood, with daddy's girls choosing husbands that look like their fathers

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## DON'T MISS...



### Maternal Spice: Mel B and Geri show off their girls

The Spice Girls may be secretly plotting a big comeback, but for now, Geri and Mel B are focusing on the little things - their babies



### Big Brother Day 15: Carole, Shabnam and Tracey to face FIRST eviction

Shabnam will face the first Big Brother eviction -by the public on Friday - along with Carole and Tracey



### [Britney reveals her cellulite - and a whole lot more](#)

At just 25-years old, it seems Britney's toxic lifestyle has taken a heavy toll on her body



### [Why on earth would anyone want to work for Sir Alan Sugar?](#)

Why would any talented young entrepreneur want to work for bad tempered and out-of-touch Sir Alan Sugar?



### [You're fired again, Katie!](#)

Last week she walked out of The Apprentice. Now the show's villain, Katie Hopkins, has been sacked from her day job



### [All shipshape: Brunette bombshell Kelly Brook's vintage glamour](#)

Kelly Brook strikes a pose as she channels vintage glamour in a photoshoot aboard a Miami yacht



### [Monkhouse 'comeback' in TV cancer ad](#)

Comedian Bob Monkhouse is making a comeback from beyond the grave in a TV campaign about the disease that killed him

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### **'Hands off!' One can pick oneself up, says Anne**

The Princess Royal slipped and fell while on a walkabout in front of crowds in Guernsey



### **The Brazilian parrot who loves to sing in the shower**

Tocky the parrot had developed a nasty cough. But when he began taking daily showers with his owner he perked right up



### **The bugs that ate my bed**

Cassie Hindry was thrilled with her new bed but not with the ominous scratching sounds that came from the mattress



### **Tiny tomatoes 'the size of berries' to hit high street**

Tiny tomatoes the size of berries are about to hit shops. At around 1cm high, the 'tomberries' are expected to be popular with children



### **The 342mph 'green' supercar that's yours for a cool £1m**

The new Acabion will leave any Ferrari, Porsche or Lamborghini trailing in its wake



## [Meet Alice, Doris and Gladys: Britain's oldest identical triplets](#)

The country's oldest living identical triplets, 80, show youngsters how to throw a party



## [Baby mountain gorilla found clinging to body of mother 'executed' by rebels](#)

See the orphaned baby mountain gorilla found clinging to her dead mother in the Congo

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