

RIGOROUS INTUITION

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN'T HURT THEM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2005

Oh, the places you go (when you follow the money)

Let's pick a story. Say, data recovery from the World Trade Center.

Remember? While the ruins still smoldered, some genuine questions were still being asked by the mainstream media, which were blessedly unaware of how awkward the answers might prove.

For instance, [this story](#), from December 17, 2001:

German computer experts are working round the clock to unlock the truth behind an unexplained surge in financial transactions made just before two hijacked planes crashed into New York's World Trade Center on September 11.

Were criminals responsible for the sharp rise in credit card transactions that moved through some computer systems at the WTC shortly before the planes hit the twin towers?

Or was it coincidence that unusually large sums of money, perhaps more than \$100 million, were rushed through the computers as the disaster unfolded?

And this, from [CNN](#), a few days later:

An unexplained surge in transactions was recorded prior to the attacks, leading to speculation that someone might have profited from previous knowledge of the terrorist plot by moving sums of money. But because the facilities of many financial companies processing the transactions were housed in New York's World Trade Center, destroyed in the blasts, it has until now been impossible to verify that suspicion.

That's where Convar Systeme Deutschland GmbH comes in. The company is helping reconstruct data from hard disk drives found in the ruins of the twin towers. While other data-recovery companies are also involved in the effort, the

company says it has a special edge: a laser-based scanning technology developed about two years ago.

Peter Henschel, director of Convar, [called](#) the extent of the transactions "extraordinarily high."

Further:

"It could turn out that Americans went on an absolute shopping binge on that Tuesday morning. But at this point there are many transactions that cannot be accounted for," Henschel said.... "Not only the volume but the size of the transactions was far higher than usual for a day like that. There is a suspicion that these were possibly planned to take advantage of the chaos."

Richard Wagner, a data retrieval expert at the company, said illegal transfers of more than \$100 million might have been made immediately before and during the disaster.

"There is a suspicion that some people had advance knowledge of the approximate time of the plane crashes in order to move out amounts exceeding \$100 million," Wagner said. "They thought that the records of their transactions could not be traced after the main frames were destroyed."

As Convar recovered the data, at a cost of up to \$35,000 per hard drive, the information was forwarded to its clients (apparently telecommunications, accounting, and credit card firms), which in turn passed it on to the FBI.

A [Reuters](#) story claims "Convar has recovered information from 32 computers that support assumptions of dirty doomsday dealings." And an [article](#) dated May 30, 2002, says Convar "had recovered the data from 39 computers...and was beginning to work on another 62.... [T]he next time you 'erase' something by clicking delete, it might help to remember Convar: once on view, always on recall."

So, what happened to the WTC data-recovery story, and the "dirty doomsday dealings"?

We need to step back, and ask, what happened to Convar?

In June, 2002, Convar was purchased by security firm Kroll Inc., which employs a number of former FBI and CIA officials, and has a reputation for serving as a cut-out of US Intelligence. It's [reportedly](#) known as the "CIA of Wall Street," due to its revolving door of

former-and-future spooks, and its role in corporate espionage and the destabilization of foreign governments.

We can learn something about Kroll's reputation from a [front-page story](#) of *The Washington Post*, January 8, 1996:

The French, the CIA, and the Man Who Sued Too Much

William Lee is a 57-year-old Harvard-educated corporate lawyer whose specialty, until recently, was international mergers and acquisitions. But a year ago, the government of France charged that he was a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency, waging a secret war to destabilize French corporate interests in Asia.

...

Some of the French anxiety about Lee stems from what he did next. In mid-1992, he took a part-time position with Kroll Associates, a New York firm that provides investigative services for big companies and employs a number of former CIA and FBI officers.

For French officials, Lee's brief stint with Kroll tagged him as a suspicious person. According to French and U.S. sources, the French equivalent of the FBI, known as the Directorate of Surveillance of the Territory, or DST, suspected that Kroll's Paris operation was a CIA front. They bugged Kroll's Paris offices and harassed some of its clients, according to company executives.

And [this story](#), from October of last year:

Brazil Raids Kroll Offices in SpyProbe

Police raided the Brazilian offices of international security consultant Kroll Inc. and arrested five employees Wednesday in an investigation into allegations of illegal spying by Kroll during the company's probe of a nasty corporate dispute.... Five Brazilians Kroll workers were arrested on conspiracy charges.

...The investigation began in July after Brazil's largest newspaper reported Kroll obtained copies of e-mails written by a top adviser to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the course of its investigation for Brasil Telecom Participacoes SA.

Interestingly, in August of 2001, it was then-Managing Director of Kroll, Jerome Hauer, who arranged for former FBI special agent John O'Neill, to be hired as chief of security at the World Trade Center.

Besides being in Kroll's service on September 11, Hauer was also running Rudolph Giuliani's "Office of Emergency Management," and its hardened "command and control" bunker on the 22nd floor of WTC 7. (Perhaps you remember what happened to [that](#).)

I believe too little attention is paid to the role of *extra*-governmental agencies, both to the 9/11 story and beyond, because it is in their study that Danny Casolaro saw what he came to call the Octopus: the international network of spooks, *former* spooks, crooks and terrorists, pursuing *trans*-national criminal interests. To say "it's the CIA" is too simplistic, too black and white for the world of shadows. As Chaim Kupferberg [writes](#):

It is, in fact, security firms like Kroll Associates, Burns Security, Teg, Wackenhut, and their ilk that should garner our interest at least as much as the web of conservative think tanks that have welded in place the parameters of "mainstream" debate - for it is through these very firms that the former stars of law enforcement have gone through the revolving door into the lucrative private sector. It is a world where former military types mix with various operatives of the CIA, FBI, DEA and any number of alphabet soup agencies charged with the security of our nation.

Since acquiring Convar, Kroll itself has been purchased by Marsh & McLennan, a former occupant of Tower One's 95th floor. Last October, Kroll's former President, Michael Cherkasky, was [named](#) Marsh's CEO. (Formerly, Cherkasky had "spent 16 years in the criminal justice system, including serving as chief of the Investigations Division for the New York County District Attorney's Office.")

And what an upstanding corporate citizen Marsh turns out to be. Just [yesterday](#), it reached a deal with New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer "that resolves the actions that were commenced against MMC and Marsh Inc. over questionable brokerage compensation and account placement practices":

As a result of this agreement, the company said it would enact reforms to lead the industry in transparency and service to clients and establish an \$850 million fund to compensate clients.

Under the terms of the agreement, the company neither admits nor denies the allegations in the complaint filed by the attorney general and the citation issued by the insurance superintendent.

Corporate espionage, US Intelligence, High Crime, Big Money - you can't talk about any of them, without talking about them all. *"We are not talking about only governmental levels. And I keep underlining semi-legit organizations and following the money,"* says Sibel Edmonds.

And what of those "dirty doomsday dealings" on the World Trade Center hard drives? They'll get back to us, I'm sure of it, any day now....

POSTED BY JEFF AT 10:30 AM

60 COMMENTS:

 Jeremy said...

I think some of my synapses just imploded . . .

3:33 PM

 Anonymous said...

My pet goat?

3:43 PM

 Anonymous said...

Many different strands coming together, but I think a key link is the big business/organized crime nexus. The US has allied itself with drug-trafficking proxies at least since the Kuomintang, but the "revolving door" process really accelerated after the post-Watergate Church hearings, when the Bushists began to privatize intelligence, security and covert operations to avoid congressional oversight.

Douglas Farah has a recent concrete example of this nexus:

<http://www.douglasfarah.com/2005/01/did-viktor-bouts-network-really-stop.html>

6:52 PM

 Jeff said...

Thanks for that Farah link; very interesting. And you make an excellent point, about the privatization of Intelligence.

10:19 PM

 Spooked said...