

THE WAYNE SIMMONS OPERATION

In August 2008, in the waning days of Bush Administration, GOP hack Wayne Simmons got a job with a Defense Contractor (I'm not sure, but it may be BAE Systems) to serve as a Human Terrain System team Leader. He told the contractor he had worked for CIA for decades, and as such was eligible for security clearance. He got an interim security clearance for the role. He completed training for the role, but never deployed, and appears to have ended that relationship in March 2009, after President Obama's election and inauguration.

From April 2010 through August 2010, presumably relying on the representation a security clearance was already in the works with the earlier Human Terrain contract and relying on a second interim security clearance, Simmons contracted with the subcontractor to another company and deployed to Afghanistan to serve as a senior counterinsurgency consultant to ISAF. This would have put him in the vicinity of Stanley McChrystal and – after McChrystal's Rolling Stone related downfall – David Petraeus during the early days of the surge.

These details from the Simmons indictment released yesterday make me wonder whether there's not something more to this case.

The case ties its jurisdiction to Eastern District of Virginia – where local spooks and the Pentagon can bury really inconvenient facts – through three different charges. The first is a scheme, dating from 2011 to 2013, to get Virginia bank account holder E.L. to send him \$125,000 for some kind of land deal, which seems like an add on to the indictment that otherwise ties to fraudulently getting clearance. There's a separate part, tied to the invoices from the ISAF subcontractor in MD to its prime in VA, that ties it to VA, as well, but that's an attenuated basis (not that that ever stopped

EDVA).

And then there's the false statement Simmons made in 2009 to State (but in a letter sent to Arlington, VA) to support his security clearance application. As part of his false statements, Simmons hid a felony weapons possession conviction that dates to 1984, which in turn dates back to a 1980ish Maryland conviction.

The indictment is silent about how Simmons' lies were discovered. It is also silent on whether he ever actually received a full clearance. (I wondered, when I first heard of this, if his lies were discovered in the aftermath of the OPM hack, since his attempts to get clearance, and potentially any record of the 1984 felony, would have shown up there; remember that records dating back to 1984 were stolen.)

In his online bio (which is presumably facetious as well), Simmons claims to have done the following:

1973: Join the Navy

1973: Recruited by the CIA where he joined the "Outside Paramilitary Special Operations Group," working in Central and South America and the Middle East

[1984: Possession of a firearm with prior felony]

2002: Joins Fox

2004: Joins Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon Outreach Program for Military and Intelligence Analysts propaganda program (which would probably not be unrelated to his ties to Fox)

July 2005: First trip to Gitmo as an "outside Intelligence officer"

July 2006: Second trip to Gitmo [see below for update]

July 2006: Consultant to write Military Commissions Act of 2006

March 2008: Third trip to Gitmo

2014: Citizens Commission for Benghazi serves to drive “demand” for Benghazi committee (though curiously, the report tied to this actually offers more serious critiques of our engagement in Libya than any other right wing attack, which is rather interesting given Simmons’ past association with Petraeus)

Media Matters has a summary of the stances he has taken on Fox, which are core anti-Democratic attacks and Islamophobia.

All of which is to say that Simmons seems to be a long time conservative covert operative and propagandist, with (if his claims about Gitmo are true) ties to torture and similar. Which would make his deceitful efforts to get himself stationed in ISAF at a key time of particular interest.

Update: Thanks to Konrad Roeder for the link to Simmons’ firearms charge, which notes he was convicted of something else in Maryland in 1980.

Update: I asked Joseph Hickman, author of the (highly recommended) *Murder at Camp Delta* whether he had ever run into Simmons. Hickman was at Gitmo from March 2006 through March 2007. He responded,

One of my responsibilities at GTMO was to keep track of every person coming in and out of Camp America (Camp America housed all of the DOD detention facilities at the time: Camp Delta, Camp 5, Camp Echo, and Camp Iguana). I had several soldiers under my command for this task. I can tell you Wayne Simmons Never went to any of those facilities. I never saw him. I contacted two of my soldiers after you raised the question to me, and asked them as well. Neither of them ever saw him at GTMO.

That doesn’t mean Simmons wasn’t at Gitmo, but if he was, he was somewhere else, such as at the Camp No facility where three detainees died in June 2006.

Update: I pinged Cannonfire, who's great at digging into these half-live frauds. He's got a post on what he found on Simmons here.