

ERIK PRINCE'S LONG FORM GRAYMAIL

Remember that Vanity Fair tell all in which Erik Prince offered new details about Blackwater ops? Though Michael Hayden has suggested Prince made up some of the details, it seemed to be a form of graymail targeted at those who approved Blackwater ops now under criminal investigation. Apparently, there's a long form version.

Erik Prince, chairman of the private security firm once known as Blackwater, is writing a memoir that says Democratic officials in two administrations approved of his most sensitive and controversial operations, sources close to the company, now known as XE Services, said. [snip] But two sources, speaking independently, said that Prince will name Democratic officials in both the Clinton and Obama administrations who allegedly approved of clandestine intelligence operations carried out by Blackwater on behalf of the CIA and other government agencies. "He's going to drop the names of people who, before, were saying, 'Yeah, go kill Osama Bin Laden' and stuff like that, but went sideways on him when the investigations began," said one of the sources, who spoke only on condition of anonymity in order to maintain relations with the company.

Now, I'm all in favor of Erik Prince, safe in his haven in UAE, telling the details of what he's been doing in our name. I'd sure like to know about them. But Prince is nuts to think that anything he'll reveal by the election will affect the success or failures of the Democrats.

"They think this will destroy the Democratic Party in the elections," he said of Prince and his friends.

Even supposing Prince provides proof that people in the Obama Administration signed off on assassination ... the response to Obama's targeting of an American citizen for assassination has been a giant, collective yawn. And if Prince were to reveal that Clinton asked Blackwater to assassinate Osama bin Laden before 9/11? Wouldn't that suggest, first of all, that Blackwater failed to accomplish the task? And wouldn't it suggest, secondly, that Clinton was more of a bad ass about bin Laden than the Bushies up until the time when it was too late? Furthermore, we know that the Obama Administration continues to employ Blackwater.

Sure, learning that Obama employed Blackwater for tasks that should be limited to government employees would piss someone like me off. But the rest of the country would go back to watching Koran burnings and football.

The Spy Talk article on Prince's memoir offers one more curious detail: that Parsons is the leading bidder to buy the company formerly known as Blackwater. Parsons is notable because it was almost certainly the most corrupt, incompetent construction contractor wasting reconstruction dollars in Iraq. Not only that, but it had ties every bit as close as Halliburton did to top members of the Administration.

I'd like to connect that news with another of yesterday's big stories, the news that the Police Academy Parsons built in Iraq has shit raining from the ceiling.

The Baghdad Police College, hailed as crucial to U.S. efforts to prepare Iraqis to take control of the country's security, was so poorly constructed that feces and urine rained from the ceilings in student barracks. Floors heaved inches off the ground and cracked apart. Water dripped so profusely in one room that it

was dubbed "the rain forest."

They're related, you see, because Parsons also had extraordinary access to Karl Rove. When Parsons signed this contract in 2004, its lobbyist was a woman named Karen Johnson. And in addition to being the business partner of Dick Cheney's hunting buddy, Katharine Armstrong, Karen Johnson is known to be close to Karl Rove. So close, in fact, that it is rumored they're lovers. At one point, Karen Johnson was not entirely forthcoming about her ties to the White House. When she first filled out her lobbying disclosure forms for 2004, the year in which she helped Parsons get a contract to build a shit shower instead of a police academy, Johnson forgot that she had been, um, lobbying the White House.

If Parsons were to take over the company formerly known as Blackwater, it would single source all the worst in contracting: cowboys with guns immune from the law, contractors who do shitty (literally) work for inflated amounts of taxpayer dollars, and influence peddling. What a perfect next chapter for Blackwater!

Update: Jeremy Scahill suggests there are Democrats worried about this. I guess this may be more about embarrassing those Democrats—like those currently or formerly on the intelligence committees, presumably—who signed off on Blackwater activities.