

A Question for DCI Porter Goss

by Anton Chaitkin

On Sept. 13, the eve of hearings scheduled on the nomination of Florida Congressman Porter Goss as Director of Central Intelligence, LaRouche PAC released a question about the narcotics trafficking events around Lee County, Florida, where Goss had served as County Commissioner. The Sept. 13 question was appended to the LaRouche PAC testimony submitted to the Intelligence Committee (see p. 62). That question is still unanswered, and this report provides the dramatic background for what Goss must still be asked.

Porter Goss was a County Commissioner in Lee County from 1982 to 1988, during a protracted Federal investigation into a narcotics-smuggling ring that was thought to be coordinated through leaders of Lee County's Sheriff's Department. The investigation occurred as dope-running was exploding, mainly through Florida, deluging decaying American cities and destroying young lives, as the U.S. industrial economy fell apart. This same time-frame was the period of the "Iran-Contra" crimes, cocaine smuggling, and money-laundering enterprises protected by the Reagan Administration apparatus that was led by Vice President George H.W. Bush and was identified with Oliver North.

Federal and state law enforcement officials who pursued that Lee County drug ring still express shock and bitterness at the squelching of the investigation. They state that it was stopped by higher-ups, and that officers who cooperated with the probe were fired and moved out of the way. Those who wanted to push the investigation were warned, "You must stay away from this affair; it is off-limits." The Fort Myers *News-Press*, the paper that carried the story as it unfolded in the mid-1980s, was sued for defamation. A local judge twice dismissed the suit against the newspaper, but this decision was reversed by a higher court. The case was ultimately settled out of court.

Some members of the Federal task force that investigated the case, today state that they are "petrified" about going public, because Porter Goss is going into such a high national position, and because the very targets of the 1980s probe, who went free, may now be coming back into local government.

Who blocked the investigation and prosecutions? This is the question that Porter Goss should be asked.

As a Lee County Commissioner (and Commission chairman 1985-86), Goss was responsible for the budget of the Sheriff's Department, and should be presumed to be in touch with such a high-profile affair.

When the lead investigator, U.S. Attorney Robert Merkle,

reportedly complained that "the intelligence industry" was putting roadblocks in the way of the probe, former CIA officer Porter Goss was the highest-connected leader, socially and financially, among the many intelligence community veterans who then dominated the political life of the local area, along with certain lawyers and other power brokers.

Merkle was in a position to know of such intelligence intrigues, because he had led the prosecutions of Carlos Lehder and Manuel Noriega.

As reported here, Goss's personal, family, and Agency background combined to put him into the ranks of the immediate servants of the Harriman and Dulles faction of the British and Wall Street financiers, who have twisted U.S. strategic policy to sponsor the emergence of narcotics cartels and the cartels' bankers as a unified "Dope, Inc." world power.¹

It was this Dope, Inc. apparatus that flew its planes into Lee County, and positioned itself to protect those suspected of coordinating the smuggling.

The Corkscrew Incident

The Fort Myers *News-Press* reported on Dec. 11, 1983: "Narcotics agents and a federal grand jury are focusing a major drug smuggling investigation on members of the Lee County Sheriff's Department, including the second in command, Col. David Wilson. Wilson—who is Sheriff Frank Wanicka's chief administrative officer—confirmed he has been the target of the federal grand jury investigation for more than two years. A former special deputy, Danny Moss, who Wilson said is his close friend, also has been under investigation."

Colonel Wilson was the "undersheriff" to Sheriff Frank Wanicka, and, according to sources, the actual power in the Sheriff's Department from 1973 until he retired in 1996. Thus, Wilson's reign began two years after Goss retired from the CIA, came into the county, and was set up by CIA colleagues as the manager of Sanibel Island. Wilson left his post when Goss was the area's Congressman, on the House Intelligence Committee, and soon to be its chairman.

The *News-Press* reported: Former U.S. Attorney William King "wrote that the drug ring is thought to be responsible for bringing in at least one load of marijuana and cocaine a month . . . [and] to have been led by former FBI special agent J.R.

1. See *Dope, Inc.: The Book That Drove Kissinger Crazy* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Intelligence Review, 1992).



International political operative Louis St. Laurent II (on left), attorney for Undersheriff Col. David Wilson (on right). Wilson was the target of Federal drug probes in Porter Goss's district.

'Buddy' Carter of Fort Myers and Key Largo. Carter, 57, was convicted . . . in connection with \$240,000 worth of marijuana flown into southeast Lee County."

The paper said that the investigation arose out of "at least two federal drug cases during the past three years." One convicted cocaine dealer, David Pattison, testified to a grand jury that he "based his drug operation in Fort Myers because he had been told three top-ranking officials of the sheriff's department were involved in smuggling."

The other case was described by the *News-Press*: On the night of July 9, 1981, an "unlighted airplane with a false identification number on its tail and no identifying electronic signals was picked up on radar . . . by U.S. Customs officials. . . . Customs interdiction aircraft . . . followed the unlighted plane to an unlighted runway off Corkscrew Road near where [Danny] Moss manages the 6 L's Ranch. The unidentified plane landed first. As the Customs plane attempted to land behind it, a horse trailer was drawn across the runway by Carter's wife, Joy, and the Customs pilot was forced to veer away quickly to avoid a collision."

Customs got a helicopter in soon afterwards, but meanwhile "800 pounds of marijuana were unloaded from the plane and hidden in a nearby wooded area by Carter, his brother-in-law [and another man]. . . ." Carter proceeded to the Corkscrew Country Store, which Carter co-owned with Danny Moss's wife, Debra, to phone for a getaway car. But Buddy Carter, Joy Carter, and their two accomplices were at length convicted of smuggling, in a 1983 trial.

The *News-Press* reported as follows:

Twelve days after Carter's dope plane landed at Corkscrew, Undersheriff Wilson signed a bill of sale, selling an airplane he co-owned with Danny Moss, to "Paradise Aviation-Marine Inc.," a front run by smuggler Buddy Carter and his family. The *News-Press* stated: "No one signed the bill of sale on behalf of Paradise Aviation. . . . Florida corporate records show Paradise Aviation wasn't a registered corporation in Florida until October, 1981 . . . three months after the company bought Wilson's plane. . . ."

This report was the subject of the defamation suit brought by Wilson against the *News-Press*.

Two deputies testified that they saw Wilson at the scene of the Corkscrew landing, although he claimed he was not there. Deputies testified that orders, on false pretenses, came through the Sheriff's Department dispatcher that night, ordering deputies away from the scene before the marijuana was located.

Driven by Tampa-based U.S. Attorney Robert Merkle, grand juries continued pursuing Colonel Wilson, former part-time deputy Danny Moss, and others.

The *News-Press* reported that an Arcadia, Florida contractor "has testified that a former Lee County Sheriff's Department special deputy once offered police protection and a rural airstrip to land a plane load of marijuana for a price of \$20,000. The contractor . . . said the offer was made in 1979 by Danny Moss. . . . Moss told the *News-Press* this week [the contractor's] statement is true. . . . Moss said he was trying to 'set up' the smugglers by offering them the landing strip and protection. Moss said he planned to arrest them when they

landed the drugs. ‘The only thing I connived at was, I was trying to figure out a way where I could keep the money and put them in jail,’ Moss said. . . . In the sworn statement, [the contractor] said the airstrip Moss was offering the smugglers . . . was in Corkscrew,” near the site of the Carter-Moss 1981 dope landing that led to Carter’s conviction.

The *News-Press* reported on March 1, 1984, that Sheriff Wanicka had met the previous week in Washington, D.C., with representatives of the Department of Justice, demanding that the Federal investigation of Colonel Wilson and other Sheriff’s personnel be quashed.

On July 11, 1984, “Debra Moss, a key figure in a federal investigation of possible corruption and drug smuggling within the Lee County Sheriff’s Department, was indicted . . . on two counts of lying to federal juries and two counts of obstruction of justice. [She] is the wife of former special deputy Danny Moss . . . [who with] Col. David Wilson and other current and former members of the department . . . are being investigated by a federal organized crime task force and the same federal grand jury which handed up [the] charges against Debra Moss. . . .”

Dope, Inc. Protects Itself

Yet, Debra Moss was no kingpin. And despite a reported five grand juries going after the ring based at the Sheriff’s Department, Colonel Wilson was not indicted, nor were Sheriff Wanicka, or others, although Merkle had reportedly prepared indictments and arrests for them and many other associates. According to law enforcement sources, in the early 1990s, when a new lead officer for the Fort Myers area came into one of the Federal agencies and reviewed that agency’s records of its probe of Colonel Wilson, the officer asked with anger, “Why is that man still not in prison?” The officer went to higher authorities to complain; Colonel Wilson went to Congressman Porter Goss for protection. The Federal officer was asked to a meeting with Goss—and nothing changed.

Robert Merkle died in 2003. The records of the grand juries are secret. Tired of litigation, fearful current employees of the *News-Press* “will not touch” this story, and will not cooperate in retrieving their own articles.

It is well known that within the Federal government, during the 1981-89 Reagan Administration, factions opposed each other on vital policy issues, and the Bush/North/Contras faction was deeply involved in domestic law enforcement matters—as will be seen below.

A key to the successful quashing of this probe, however, may be found in a close review of the career of one unusual local official, Louis St. Laurent II—one of the handful of top power brokers alongside Porter Goss throughout the entire war between the drug investigators and the Sheriff’s Department.

The *News-Press* reported (ca. Spring 1984) that the paper had obtained the Sheriff’s Department’s telephone toll records for July 10, 1981, the day after the Carter/Moss dope

landing at Corkscrew. Colonel Wilson evidently made no calls that day to either Buddy Carter’s business or home on the island, Key Largo.

“The only calls to the Keys reflected in the telephone records are one to the business and one to the home of Louis St. Laurent, who is a personal friend of Wilson’s and former chief assistant prosecutor for State Attorney Joseph D’Alessandro.

“St. Laurent, who runs an investment firm in the Keys, said he was subpoenaed by the grand jury and asked about the calls to him. St. Laurent said he and Wilson were planning a fishing trip in the Keys the following weekend and that he believes the calls were from Wilson making arrangements for the trip.” The *News-Press* had earlier reported (Dec. 11, 1983) that: “A few days later [after the Corkscrew incident] Wilson flew to Key Largo. He says he went there to visit a friend, Louis St. Laurent, who formerly was chief assistant prosecutor for State Attorney Joseph D’Alessandro in Fort Myers. . . . Wilson said St. Laurent told the grand jury Wilson had visited him in Key Largo.”

Louis St. Laurent spoke to *EIR* on Sept. 22, 2004, by telephone from his home in south Florida. He said that U.S. Attorney Robert Merkle “said I was running an investment business for dope smugglers, money launderers.” Laurent told *EIR* that he himself was the leading instigator of what became a national attack on Robert Merkle’s reputation, and that he had singlehandedly arranged a nationally televised “60 Minutes” program with Morley Safer, attacking Merkle as a “mad dog” prosecutor. St. Laurent was also the lawyer who sued the *News-Press* for defamation on behalf of Wilson.

This same St. Laurent was the campaign manager for Frank Wanicka’s original 1972 election as Lee County Sheriff. From 1969 to 1980, St. Laurent was Chief Assistant State Attorney for Lee County and four other counties, working directly with international law enforcement officials—under State Attorney Joe D’Alessandro, for whom he was the 1978 campaign manager. St. Laurent was a campaign leader in 1992 for Lee County Sheriff John McDougall. McDougall had replaced the disgraced Sheriff Wanicka, but Undersheriff Wilson stayed on, in power.

St. Laurent told *EIR* that during the battles against the drug prosecutors, he felt safe from anyone in Washington, because “people from Canada were backing me.”

His grandfather, the first Louis St. Laurent, after serving as Canadian Prime Minister (1948-57), was chairman of the international cigarette firm Rothmans during the 1960s. This Laurent family enterprise, Rothmans, was a personal financial and political project of South Africa’s Anton Rupert, a founder with Netherlands’ Prince Bernhard of the “1001 Club,” and other of the most extreme “Black Oligarchy” intrigues against national sovereignty in Africa and Ibero-America. Rupert brought into the Rothmans directorate Henry N.L. Keswick, former chairman of Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. and arguably the world head of Dope



Porter Goss (left) with Vice President Dick Cheney, who was responsible for ramming his nomination as CIA director through the Senate. Goss should be asked bluntly: “Porter, what squelched the dope probe in Lee County?”

Incorporated, and others in the circles of the highest British banking supporters of the shift of the world economy into dope and out of productive life.

This is the family background of Col. David Wilson’s protector, Louis St. Laurent II, a Canadian citizen until 1965, a man with good enough connections to possess transcripts of the entire secret grand jury proceedings from the 1980s Lee County dope war.

Enter Porter Goss

Let us now place the new CIA director, Porter Goss, in the same financial-political universe.

The *Washington Post* reported on May 18, 2002, that Goss, as Sanibel mayor, attended a meeting with mayors from nearby Naples, Fort Myers, and Cape Coral, and also with reporters; Goss acknowledged that all those mayors and all but one of the reporters were CIA men.

But it is his high social connections that put Goss above those other locals.

Goss’s family was the principal owner of the Scovill Manufacturing Company of Waterbury, Connecticut, from the late 19th Century. The Gosses used Scovill to get into the London-Wall Street financiers’ circuit, and to intermarry with the family of J.P. Morgan. Throughout the dope battle of the 1980s, Porter Goss was a director of the Mellon Family’s PNC bank of Florida, while the Mellons financed the “Conservative Revolution.” Porter’s brother married the sister of Pierre “Pete” du Pont IV, Delaware’s political leader.

Porter Goss then followed his brother-in-law du Pont, the chief financier behind Newt Gingrich’s rightist “revolution,” which overturned the Republicans’ moderate Eisenhower wing. Goss thus became a Congressional activist for the Gingrichism which has put through crushing austerity against the lower 80% of income brackets, on behalf of the desperately insolvent big bankers—and the Bush machine, with its sordid Florida base. When Goss arrived in Lee County in the early 1970s, he was so plugged in as to hold stock in Dresser Industries—the personal fiefdom of Harri-man’s Prescott Bush, grandfather of the current President—before Dick Cheney brought it into Halliburton.

Lehder, Bush, and Florida

U.S. Attorney Robert Merkle, blocked in Lee County, went on to prosecute Carlos Lehder—the Hitler-loving mass killer and master of Colombia’s Medellín dope cartel, who

had gotten out of jail in Miami in 1978. By the mid-1980s, Lehder was flooding Florida with cocaine that he viewed as an “atomic weapon” against the U.S.A. Merkle nailed Lehder, but Lehder was released from prison early, in exchange for testifying against Manuel Noriega, a deal arranged behind the back of Merkle, who had also prosecuted Noriega. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 26-31, 1996, reported that beginning in 1987: “Lehder got special handling from the start. Instead of being held in Florida where he would be tried, Lehder was housed in a two-cell unit at the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion, Ill., and given a telephone. There he made contact with aides to Vice President George Bush, who had run the Central Intelligence Agency during the early years of the cartel. Over the next 18 months, senior officials from the FBI, CIA, and other investigatory agencies interviewed Lehder. Merkle, the man who prosecuted Lehder, knew none of this.”

The elder Bush had inserted himself in the Florida dope crisis in the early 1980s, and had gotten directly involved in the probe in Porter Goss’s county. As the Fort Myers *News-Press* reported, June 12, 1984: “Robin Cushing, head of the Fort Myers office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, said . . . the investigation of sheriff’s deputies is being pursued by a U.S. attorney’s task force with the assistance of Vice President George Bush’s Task Force on Drugs in South Florida.”

Today, the new Bush CIA Director, Porter Goss, should be asked bluntly, what squelched the dope probe in your home territory?