

Cheney and DeLay, Joined at the Hip

by Anton Chaitkin

No one should have been surprised when Dick Cheney rushed off to Houston to keynote the Dec. 5 fundraiser for Tom DeLay. An *EIR* investigation has revealed that the embattled Vice President and the indicted former House Majority Leader are virtually joined at the hip.

Study the chart accompanying this article, and you will see that the “DeLay, Inc.” machine of lobbyists, former DeLay staffers and complicit Congressmen, and the Cheney cabal steering the Administration, are one seamless dirty apparatus, serving common financier sponsors—as must become increasingly apparent to the Federal prosecutors and investigators now swarming all over the two men’s enterprises.

Vice President Cheney and President Bush took office in January 2001, while corporate energy pirates led by Enron and Reliant Energy were looting astronomical sums from California electricity users, under new state energy-deregulation laws. Dick Cheney was immediately appointed chairman of a White House Energy Task Force (National Energy Policy Development Group) to formulate national policy and deal with the crisis.

California Gov. Gray Davis (D) pleaded for Federal intervention to stop the crippling and bankrupting of his state. Cheney coldly replied that the cause of the crisis was that deregulation had not gone far enough! Now with outright Federal protection for the scheme, ten-fold electricity price rises netted some \$50-\$100 billion for the pirates and their banker sponsors, before the game crashed.

This scheme depended on the power axis running between Tom DeLay and Dick Cheney.

After Representative DeLay of Houston became House Republican Whip in 1994, the Houston-based Enron Corporation itself hosted the first fundraising event to give birth to DeLay’s Americans for a Republican Majority (ARM-PAC). This financing vehicle was used to build up DeLay as dictator of the House of Representatives. The founding Enron event raised \$280,000; Enron CEO Ken Lay subsequently gave ARMPAC an acknowledged \$50,000 and Enron Vice Chairman Joseph Sutton gave another \$25,000.

In 1997, DeLay bid for control of the House of Representatives, with the unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Speaker Newt Gingrich and install DeLay ally Bill Paxon (R-N.Y.) as Speaker.

Enron now advanced large sums to create an extended DeLay machine. At DeLay’s request, Enron gave \$750,000

to launch a new private lobbying company, Alexander Strategy Group, to be headed by DeLay’s chief of staff Ed Buckham, with other DeLay men as partners. A.S. Group paid Tom’s wife Christine DeLay a \$40,000 salary to manage ARMPAC.

DeLay, the new firm, and Enron together created a front called Americans for Affordable Electricity (chaired by Bill Paxon, former DeLay Congressional cohort turned lobbyist), which spent lavishly to promote deregulation of electricity.

On this pivot, by 1999, DeLay ruled the House with his brazen K Street Project: the financier-driven combination of lobbyists and rightist faction leaders, including hordes of former DeLay staff members in private positions. Corporate donors, herders of voters, and legislative leaders became a single unit unlike anything in American history.

The DeLay Project was put together by Jack Abramoff, Grover Norquist, and Ralph Reed, three political operatives in partnership since 1981. This trio’s joint dirty deeds, in conjunction with DeLay, have recently splashed into national headlines, as indictments have multiplied. Note that by 1997, Ralph Reed had been hired directly by Enron to promote the energy deregulation scheme alongside DeLay, Buckham, and Paxon.

The Cheney-DeLay Axis

The 2001 inauguration of Bush and Cheney finally gave all-out national power to the sponsors of this established apparatus. The regime’s underlying political structure can be glimpsed by a close look at the Cheney entourage, through and after the period of the California looting crisis.

Cheney and his backer, financiers’ representative George Shultz, together designated the makeup of the projected administration, including choosing Cheney himself as Bush’s running mate.

Handling relations to Congress for the transition team was **David Gribben**, Cheney’s high school friend who had been aide to Secretary of Defense Cheney (1989-93), and government liaison for Halliburton Corporation under Cheney as its CEO (1995-2000).

Gribben was uniquely qualified to manage the assembly of the Cheney-DeLay axis. He is reportedly an insider at the headquarters of The Fellowship, the far-right religious manipulation agency set up by the London-Wall Street oligarchy in the Hitler era; this is the group that runs the National Prayer Breakfast. When Tom DeLay entered Congress as a sorry drunk in 1985, The Fellowship captured him and set former Nixon dirty-trickster Charles Colson as DeLay’s personal guru, in exchange for a career pushing apocalyptic initiatives by Cheney and his friends. Fellowship-affiliated power brokers include Ralph Reed, whose Christian Coalition mouthpiece Pat Robertson was manufactured by the Fellowship; the regime’s first Attorney General, John Ashcroft, who at several



tomdelay.house.gov

Tom DeLay, the former House Majority Leader, indicted on corruption charges. His personal machine of lobbyists and staffers forms one seamless web with the Cheney cabal in the White House.

points intervened to save DeLay and Abramoff; and various kooky military men and agencies under the Cheney-Rumsfeld Pentagon leadership.

Cheney has more or less lived on Capitol Hill during his reign. The DeLay connection overshadows the Vice President's limited Constitutional role as President of the Senate, and has helped sustain Cheney as de facto boss of Washington.

When David Gribben left after the 2001 Inauguration, **Nancy Dorn** took over as the Vice President's all-important director of liaison to the Senate and House. A professional lobbyist, Dorn had immediately before been a member of the DeLay inner council, known as his "Kitchen Cabinet," with Abramoff, Norquist, Paxon, and other worthies. Dorn now served in the Vice President's office alongside Cheney chief of staff Lewis Libby, who has since been indicted in the probe of Cheney's operations relating to the Valerie Plame Wilson affair.

Nancy Dorn's deputy, Stephen Ruhlen, ran day-to-day relations on the House side. Records released in the leadup to Abramoff's indictment show that the Abramoff team met directly with Ruhlen as a channel to the Administration. In 2003, after Cheney oversaw the California crisis for the energy pirates and the Wall Street bankers behind them, JP Morgan Chase was fined \$135 million for its management of the Enron scams. Ruhlen left Cheney's office in 2003 and became head of JP Morgan Chase's Washington lobbying bureau.

The Informal Government

Here we see the informal arrangements of extra-Constitutional government. For example, Mrs. Lea Berman was social director for Dick Cheney and his wife, Lynne, in 2001-02. The next year, Mrs. Berman served as Lynne Cheney's chief of staff. (She is currently White House Social Director.) Meanwhile, Mrs. Berman's lobbyist husband **Wayne Berman** was a member of DeLay's Kitchen Cabinet, representing powerful financiers such as Lazard Frères and London's Jardine and Lloyds, through DeLay to the U.S. Congress.

Wayne Berman was later installed as chairman of the Federalist Group lobbying firm, part of the K Street Project and a center for some veterans of the California crisis. Berman's partner **Drew Maloney** left DeLay's staff to join the Federalist Group in 2002. Maloney immediately arranged to take checks for \$30,000 from Reliant Energy for DeLay's use in Texas for a Republican Majority (TRMPAC), a spin-off from the DeLay-Enron ARMPAC. (DeLay has been indicted for laundering corporate money to TRMPAC.) At the Federalist Group,

Maloney began convening regular meetings of former Tom staff members ensconced along the K Street lobbying corridor.

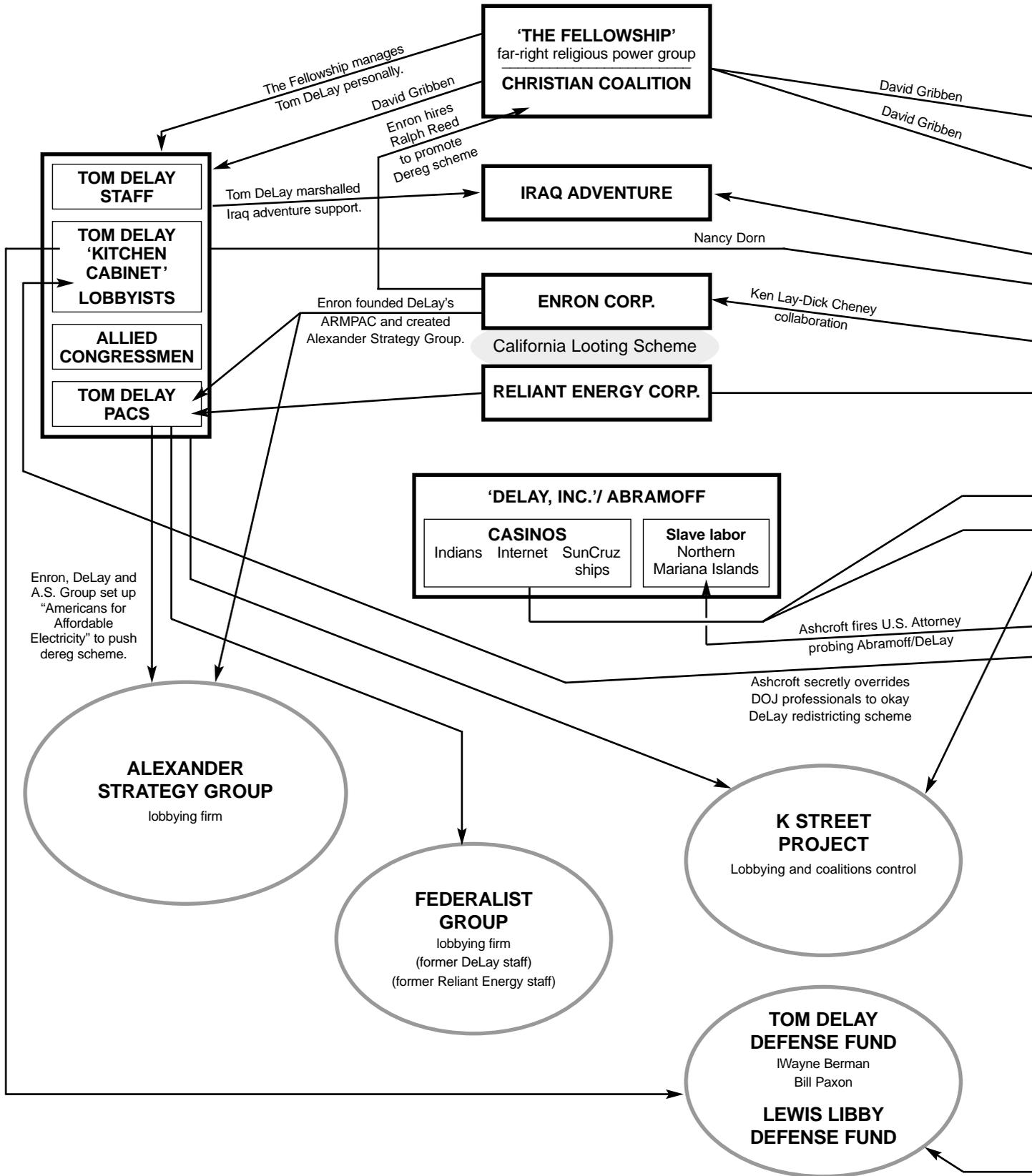
Chris Giblin is another partner under Wayne Berman. Just before joining the Federalist Group, Giblin had worked for Reliant Energy for five years, as head of the firm's Washington office, personally managing the company's California crisis alongside Cheney and DeLay.

Reliant Energy's operatives have been shown, through published telephone transcripts, to have conspired to shut down power plants to force up electricity prices to California customers. Diane Allbaugh was a paid lobbyist for Reliant Energy. Her husband, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) head **Joe Allbaugh**, was a member of Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force. Allbaugh was briefed in detail on the ongoing California cataclysm and aided Cheney in squelching action to block the looters.

Energy Task Force Chairman Cheney meanwhile met repeatedly with Enron representatives. Enron CEO Ken Lay is so far the only corporate chief executive who is known to have met privately with Cheney in connection with the Task Force. Cheney has fought desperately to keep secret the transcripts, and even the identities, of the corporations and officials who met with his Task Force.

The Flames Licking Around Cheney's Feet

Dedicated Federal investigators are now delving into the collective misdeeds of DeLay, Abramoff, Norquist, and their partners at Alexander Strategy Group and else-



where, in casino scams and Pacific island slave-labor enterprises.

J. Steven Griles is one of this clique's deployed assets, who has already been hauled, sweating and blustering, before a Senate Committee. Griles was the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, where he was Jack Abramoff's main connection in seeking to bend Interior Department policy for the clique's Indian casino objectives. Abramoff used a bizarre channel to Griles, a political front group called Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy (CREA), created by Grover Norquist with Gale Norton, before she became Interior Secretary.

Previously a professional lobbyist for big energy companies, Griles managed much of the day-to-day business of the Interior Department. He met frequently with Cheney's staff and other members of the Cheney Energy Task Force. At the same time, Cheney was frequently represented directly at the Wednesday meetings convened by Norquist, at the center of the K Street Project.

As he awaits the outcome of probes in both the Cheney and DeLay branches of government, Griles currently lobbies as a partner at Lundquist, Nethercutt and Griles. His partner **Andrew Lundquist** was an energy aide to Vice President Cheney, and was executive director of the Energy Task Force. Another partner is Joe Allbaugh, the former FEMA Director and Energy Task Force member. Allbaugh, and his wife Diane, the former Reliant Energy lobbyist, are both currently registered lobbyists for Halliburton, the firm that still pays Cheney from his time as CEO. Allbaugh went to New Orleans in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster, apparently trolling for contracts for Halliburton.

David Safavian has already been indicted, charged with lying to sabotage the investigation of Abramoff. Safavian was Abramoff's partner in the Indian casino game, and Norquist's partner lobbying for Internet gambling, capped by Tom DeLay killing a *Republican* bill to ban Internet gambling. Safavian became the chief of United States government procurement, where he played his part in quashing protests against the crimes of Cheney's Halliburton Corp. in Iraq. Just as Halliburton began going for Gulf Coast contracts after Hurricane Katrina, Safavian's indictment forced him to step down.

At the Dec. 5 DeLay event in Houston, \$4,200 would buy the donor a photograph with Dick Cheney, \$2,100 a photo with Tom DeLay. Fundraising is a very serious matter now for DeLay and for Cheney's indicted former chief of staff, Lewis Libby. The legal defense funds for *both Libby and DeLay* are being overseen by Wayne Berman and Bill Paxon, along with other insiders of the Cheney-DeLay axis. The very lists of official hosts for DeLay events in the current period, could serve prosecutors as a guide to the bull's-eye, in the fall of Dick Cheney.

