

Bird of Prey

Ever since the Mark Adams fiasco, which was rumored to be related to falsified billings on the absurd Panama project, Wilkes and his company had absolutely no support among the serious conversion programs. I was astonished that Adams' apparent quid pro quo in getting employed by Wilkes and ensconced in an Alexandria office was not subjected to a DCIS investigation, but then again, the Pentagon seemed to always prefer to bury its problems rather than put them before public view. Like with Karpovich and Barnes, that attitude unfortunately ends up costing them far more in time, money, and progress than anyone should even have to imagine. Documents that came out in Cunningham's sentencing hearing painted a graphic picture of the depths of their conspiracy to capture all the cash and deny Audre its due. The Los Angeles Times reported on May 8, 2006:

"The Pentagon was slow to pay Wilkes because Army officials in the field preferred Audre's rival system, according to an inspector general's report. So in July 1999, co-conspirator No. 1 (Wilkes) faxed Cunningham "talking points" on how to bully a Pentagon manager into releasing more government funds", presumably Kratz, although the name was redacted from the documents. "The memo instructed the lawmaker to demand that the Defense Department official shift money from another program to cover funds designated for ADCS. "We need \$10 M(illion) more immediately," Cunningham was to tell the official." "If the official didn't cooperate, Cunningham was to say his next calls would be to two high-ranking Pentagon officials. The script called for Cunningham to add: "This is very important and if you cannot resolve this others will be calling also" – two names in this passage are blacked out in the memo. Despite Cunningham's threats, the Pentagon manager was unmoved, according to grand jury testimony."

"A week later, Cunningham and Lewis called a Washington news conference to announce that they had slashed \$2 Billion in funding for the F-22 Raptor fighter jet, one of the Pentagon's prized programs, citing cost overruns. Both Congressmen had been key supporters of the project, and their comments shocked Pentagon Officials." "Within days, the same Pentagon manager who had been resistant to Cunningham's appeals sent the Congressman a list of other programs where money could be "reallocated" to Wilkes' firm, according to court documents. "The Defense Department spends \$1 Billion a day, so the (Wilkes) contract was like a rounding error. It just wasn't worth putting our big programs at risk," a senior Pentagon official said on condition

he not be identified.” “The Pentagon agreed to send \$5 million more to Wilkes’ firm, according to court documents. The F-22 funds were later restored. In subsequent years, Cunningham and Lewis supported full funding for the warplane.” Cunningham even later went onto the floor of the House to smear opponents of the Raptor program as “Communists”.

Shades of Charlie Wilson and his withholding funds from the V-22 Osprey program when they would not give his girlfriend a ride, multiplied by a factor of 10. The F-22 was the Pentagon’s pride and joy, as high profile a weapon system as there was. It was especially shocking that both would use the power of their recent appointments; Cunningham to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee itself and Lewis, Chairman of that Committee only since January, to, in the very memorable words of Charlie Wilson, show them “who held the power.” It was all quite remarkable to experience at the time, as both Cunningham and Lewis were known to be such strong advocates of the fighter jet. President Clinton and Secretary of Defense Cohen were absolutely taken aback by their antics. Years earlier I remember speaking at length with many hawkish Republicans, including Newt Gingrich, about the need for the “Raptor” program when Lockheed’s Georgia plant was designated to do much of the work. I had even discussed it with Cunningham during his wine fueled “Shatner-esque” serenade on the Kelly C.

Since my introducing the Duke to Dr. Kogan in 1993 was always a favorite subject between Cunningham and me, we engaged in a detailed discussion on his houseboat, comparing the Raptor to Russia’s then prominent Su-37 “Terminator” prototype. Both had vectoring thrust exhaust nozzles that allowed for extreme maneuverability and the “Terminator” prototype had been known to perform some amazing stunts. Duke was animated, adamant and even agitated when he exclaimed that “America needed the Raptor urgently” and that it was the key to retaining our air supremacy. It is amazing to contemplate today the depths of corruption that it appears evident that Cunningham and Lewis were prepared to delve to, in support of Wilkes’ extortion of funds. Audre was struggling in the blackness of bankruptcy, as tens of millions of dollars continued to flow to Wilkes for a product no one wanted and services he apparently did not even bother to complete. I realize now that it was no wonder that General Dynamics suddenly disappeared from the scene. What a shameless scam for a cadre of congressmen on the Defense Appropriation Subcommittee who constantly crowed about supporting our military and related essential domestic technology. They

were a scary bunch and had proved that they would not hesitate to hurt the interests of anyone or anything that stood in their path.

The LA Times further reported that the Department of Defense had “concluded that Wilkes’ ADCS had fraudulently billed the Pentagon \$750,000 for document scanning work at the Panama Canal that was never completed...A Pentagon official alerted Cunningham. Instead of taking action, the Congressman later called the official’s boss to complain about his work, according to court documents.” Right in the middle of all of this, with my having absolutely no clue about what was really going on other than what I was reading in the paper or hearing on TV about the F-22 fiasco, it comes around to being time again for the Duke’s annual picnic at Bell Gardens, and I spend \$125 to purchase a table for ten. I was hoping to use the occasion to see if there was even the possibility of communicating with Cunningham.

I filled the table with our employees and friends, asking that they be as friendly and festive as possible, but it did not take long to find that we were not welcome at the Duke and Duchess’ picnic. Cunningham was like ice to me, and did not respond when I told him that our demonstration had gone well at GD. Nancy acted like I was invisible as she made the rounds greeting the attendees, which struck me as unwarranted. She had always been very nice to me since our first meeting, and the fact that I had not only introduced the Duke to the man that made the missile that shot him down, but that Nancy and Karen had so much in common. That entire pleasantry was a thing of the past and if the Duke was mad at me, his partner in lavishness, the Duchess was as well.

I presumed that Cunningham was still pissed over the “On the wings of a donor” article, but now I realize that the military was still strongly in support of Audre, and that they were resisting paying Wilkes or playing any more of his games. Since Wilkes’ shit traveled hot and fast downhill to smell up the Duke’s domain, and he had to cry to his boss Lewis for help, Audre was very top of mind for Cunningham at the picnic and we had become the root cause of a very bad migraine headache for him. He was not a happy camper, made it known and I had no clue as to why. Of course, it would have been unusual for it to have crossed my mind that our success was antagonizing the Congressman within whose District Audre resided in, or that the possibility that hundreds of his direct constituents might salvage their savings was upsetting to him.

It was also quite revealing that he and Nancy were in such lock-step with each other. It is always interesting to see how well-connected political spouses are, and the role they play in supporting their positions. Duke and Nancy would always split up to work a room, with each usually displaying a broad smile and the personal touch. Cunningham got to return the favor for all of Nancy's work, according to his own frequent boasts, by using his position as the Chairman of the Economic and Educational Opportunities Subcommittee responsible for public schools, and his later position on the Appropriations Committee, to support programs that would further her interests and career. Of course, she later denied even knowing he was appropriating funds for Education. That was a more than suspect statement, not only given that he would always publicly claim to be assisting Nancy's educational interests, but because her later posting as a Chief of Staff under the Secretary of Education put her in the middle of Washington's funding fun and games.

Apparently Kratz was taking a royal beating, and it did not take much to get Gary grumbling about wanting to get back to DARPA and as far away from the ADCS program as he could. We had often talked about not only the incessant hijacking of the program's money, but also the format fiasco that was going to explode as soon as someone above him was willing to acknowledge that the tens of millions of dollars they were also spending on bogus service bureau projects not only with Wilkes, but also Intergraph, Tomahawk and others to convert information to a 2-D vector (.dxf) format that was known to be completely useless to the 3-D design processes the Pentagon had by then universally adopted. It was a problem most everyone wanted to ignore because converting data into 2-D AutoCAD was extremely easy compared to performing the task using parametric modeling techniques. It took Audre's most sophisticated symbol and attribute recognition capabilities to make our real-time circuit simulation demonstration work. We had also repeatedly demonstrated taking contour map scans automatically to 3-D terrain models and even showed the power of our artificial intelligence programs ability to identify lineal and radial dimensions with their associated surfaces to produce scaled renderings, not that it seemed anyone other than Dr. Jones had comprehended the significance of what we were doing.

Our text and symbol engines had the capability to recognize any structured language, part or object, freestanding, embedded or rotated. There was no other software program with that capability and yet we had barely earned \$3

M in the four years since the completion of the \$34 M of software testing and evaluations. By comparison it was estimated Wilkes had grabbed by this time over \$40 million in funding. According to virtually all accounts, there was absolutely nothing to show for his payments except some stupid and incomplete scans of decaying huts in Panama, and stacks of unwanted German software stuffed into a West Virginia warehouse. At that same point in time, the LA Times reported "Flush with government business, Wilkes bought a \$1.4-million home in 1999 on a gated, two-acre estate in the San Diego Suburb of Poway, with a tennis court and pool." The property had been owned by the San Diego Chargers' starting quarterback Stan Humphreys, but now Wilkes was calling the plays.