

Diary sheds light on senator's relationship with lobbyists

□ Sen. Bob Packwood kept detailed entries recording secret happenings on Capitol Hill.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Bob Packwood wrote his own headline for the behind-the-scenes dealings with lobbyists that helped lead to his downfall: "Republican Fat Cat Buys off Senator with Job to Senator's Wife."

That diary entry, dated Dec. 10, 1990, is part of a rare glimpse into the backroom connections among money, politics and lobbyists that usually are only whispered about on Capitol Hill, if they are mentioned at all.

The Oregon Republican had not slept the night before, worried that his divorce proceedings would have to go to a public trial and the arrangements he had made with lobbyists and political backers to reduce his alimony payments would become known, resulting in headlines like the one he wrote.

The Justice Department earlier this year declined to prosecute Packwood for soliciting jobs for his former wife from the lobbyists.

Yet the diaries provide unusual insights into how lobbyists and business executives sometimes exploit personal connections inside the Capitol. Excerpts were released last week by the Senate Ethics Committee.

In one blunt entry, Packwood wrote that Ronald Crawford, a lobbyist with the firm F/P Research Associates, was helpful to him in raising money from Washington political action committees "because much of his income is dependent on his relationship with me. He has got a vested interest in my staying in office."

In another, Packwood recounted a 1990 dinner conversation with Crawford in which the lobbyist offered to put up \$7,500 a year to help support Packwood's wife, Georgie, after their marriage broke up.

"If you're chairman of the Finance Committee, I can probably double that," he quoted Crawford as saying. Packwood, who at the time was a senior minority member of the tax-writing panel, later told the Ethics Committee the remark was meant as a joke.

Packwood's entries underscore that access to

the powerful is the commodity that nets lobbyists their six-figure salaries.

Once, he wrote, he let a group of officials from the American Iron and Steel Institute into his office only because Crawford was their lobbyist. Another time, Crawford came to Packwood's office with a prospective client after explaining, "People hear that you're tough to get to, and they know I can get to you." Packwood wrote that he responded, "Well, that's a happy relationship for all of us."

And on Sept. 13, 1989, Packwood recorded: "Ron Crawford was in. He had a special problem involving the transfer of partnership properties. ... what its tax consequences are. He said his client was Shell Oil and this was very, very important to him personally. He said, 'I know how much you hate the oil companies.' I said, 'Ron, I still hate the oil companies but I'll do you a favor.'"

Crawford, in a deposition before the ethics panel, said he didn't offer Georgie Packwood a job based on any request from the senator, but said he had considered hiring her part-time. He acknowledged that his contacts with Packwood and his former aides were important to his lobbying business.

"A lot of the former staffers are sprinkled throughout the administration," he said. An annual party for Packwood associates at his home "is just an attempt to enhance my own business opportunities through those people, contacts, whatever they might be," Crawford added.

Two of Packwood's job solicitations for his former wife underscored the importance of personal relationships forged when lobbyists begin their careers as congressional aides.

Steven R. Saunders, who represents Japan's Mitsubishi Corp. in Washington, worked for Packwood for four years on Capitol Hill; Tim Lee, owner of an Oregon freight logistics company and a major Packwood fund raiser, once was an intern for Packwood.

Saunders had an interest in a patent dispute between his employer and a U.S. competitor that had landed in Congress' lap, the Ethics Committee found. Lee, although not a lobbyist, had an interest in legislation to overturn a Supreme Court decision that could have hurt his trucking business, the panel said.

Plane crashes into house killing 12

SHACKLEFORDS, Va. — A plane carrying 12 members of a skydiving team crashed into a house on Sunday, killing a man sitting on his back and everyone aboard.

The house caught fire, authorities said no one was injured in the row of about 10 houses along a wooded lane near Tidewater Virginia was built in the 1950s.

Mattie Byrd was lying in bed when she heard the laboring overhead: "I saw the plane in the air, it turned like it wanted to back the other way, then it made a nosedive."

"I was assuming it was going in the back door of the house. It sounded like it was going through something, then it went boom. By the time we got outside, it had blown there was fire everywhere."

A body count at the scene confirmed there were 11 people on the plane, said Mary Evans, a state police spokeswoman. She said their names were not released until Monday.

Byrd said her neighbor, Vincent Harris, owned a trucking company and moonlighted as a Baptist minister, was killed but his son, Vincent Jr., who was 8 or 9, was playing outside and wasn't injured.

The plane, a Beechcraft Queen Air BE-65, went down about 6:45 p.m. just east of Shacklefords, about 40 miles east of Richmond. It crashed about 15 minutes after taking off from West Point Municipal Airport, said Arlene Salac, spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

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Gingrich urges against independent candidacy

□ The current Speaker of the House wants Gen. Colin Powell to remain in the current party system.

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Newt Gingrich urged retired Gen. Colin Powell to give up any idea of an independent candidacy, saying Sunday that having a president outside the current party system is "a joke" that could lead to disaster.

Gingrich, in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," also revealed some details of the GOP plan to restore fiscal integrity to Medicare, including a proposal to apply means-testing to couples earning more than \$125,000.

Powell, in his new autobiography, says he is comfortable with neither party and the time may be ripe for the rise of a third party to

represent the political center of America. He makes no commitment to lead such a party.

Gingrich, R-Ga., strongly urged him against that course. "I think it's frankly in the long run a joke," he said. "This country is a party country. ... There is no magic independence of people who are just able to stand up and magically produce a government."

An independent presidency would be "a disaster for this country," he said.

If Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ran as a Republican, he would immediately become the chief rival to GOP

front-runner Sen. Bob Dole, Gingrich said.

Gingrich, like Powell, says he will make no announcement of his own presidential intentions until the end of the year. He has stated that he would take a pass if Powell were to run as a Republican, but in any case is leaning against entering the race.



Powell



Gingrich

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