

April 25 2005 -New Gannon Documents Create More Questions: Reps. Slaughter & Conyers Renew Call on..

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Documents Released by Department of Homeland Security

Raise New Questions/Underscore Existing Concerns

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, and Rep. John Conyers (D-MI-14), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee today released a letter written to White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan

The letter was written after a review of documents released to Rep. Slaughter & Conyers by the Department of Homeland Security in response to their Freedom of Information Act request for materials related to White House media credentialing procedure and discredited conservative "reporter" Jeff Gannon.

LETTER TO SCOTT McCLELLAN:

April 25, 2005

Scott McClellan

Assistant to the President and Press Secretary

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. McClellan,

We write to ask you to identify who in your office, or in the White House generally, gave Mr. James Guckert a.k.a. "Jeff Gannon" virtually unfettered access to the White House. In reviewing the response to our Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to the Department of Homeland Security several of our specific concerns were validated. While your office and the White House have claimed Gannon was treated as just another reporter, the records we have obtained affirm that Gannon was granted access to the White House which appears to be unusual for any reporter. Out of concern for not only security, but also avoiding White House dissemination of propaganda, we request an explanation to the following:

- 1. The Department of Homeland Security's records indicate that Mr. "Gannon" entered the White House Complex 196 times in the past two years. He attended 155 of the 196 press conferences held at the White House in the two year period. This is disconcerting considering that your office and "Mr. Gannon" have maintained that his access was sporadic. At what point is a "hard pass" required?
- 2. The records show that Mr. "Gannon" was allowed access to the White House 38 times when no public press events occurred. He also spent hours in the White House both before and after press events took place. With whom did he meet on those occasions and what was the subject matter of those meetings?
- 3. On 13 occasions there is a record where he checked in with security, but is never registered as leaving the White House complex. How do you explain this?
- 4. Your Media Assistant, Lois Cassano, requested a total of 48 day passes for Mr. "Gannon" which helped facilitate his access for nearly 200 times over the last two years. It is nearly impossible that she would have made Gannon such a priority without direction from a supervisor. Would you like to revise your claim that, "I don't involve myself in that process, it's handled at a staff level." [1]

These records appear to confirm our concern that Gannon was treated in a manner that deviated from standard White House procedure for determining who receives press credentials, and to what degree members of the press and public are granted access to the White House complex. In fact, these entry and exit records only raise more questions, as your office has issued conflicting statements about his activities and apparently abused the press pass policy to avoid a full-fledged background investigation and allow Republican propaganda to be disseminated through a counterfeit media operation and a fake reporter.

Mr. McClellan, we have yet to receive any direct communication from your office in response to our repeated requests for information. The American people deserve to know what is happening in the White House Briefing room. It is unacceptable that you continue to deny them this information.

Sincerely,

/s

Rep. Louise Slaughter

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.

Ranking Member

Ranking Member

House Rules Committee

House Judiciary Committee