



Written by [Andy Ramirez](#) on August 20, 2012

Former Border Patrol Union President Indicted for Fraud; Similar Abuses Ignored by DHS

Terrence J. "TJ" Bonner, retired president of the National Border Patrol Council (the union representing U.S. Border Patrol Agents), was indicted by a federal grand jury in San Diego late last week.

Bonner was accused of abusing his position by diverting hundreds of thousands of dollars in union funds for personal use beginning in 2007. He is also accused of 12 counts of conspiring to commit fraud, wire fraud, and forfeiture of ill-gotten gains in a scheme to defraud 14,000 dues-paying union members. The indictment also accuses him of using funds to visit an alleged mistress in Chicago, attend hockey games, and utilizing dozens of union-purchased hard drives in order to download and store pornography.



The indictment additionally alleges that Bonner submitted expense vouchers seeking reimbursement for union-related travel expenses such as meals, car rentals, tips, luggage, books, and magazines when he was actually travelling for personal reasons, including vacations and other non-union activity.

The press release from the Office of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California includes the following quote by current U.S. Attorney Laura Duffy, an appointee of the Obama Administration: "Siphoning hundreds of thousands of dollars from hard-working fellow Border Patrol agents, many of whom put their lives on the line every day to protect this country, is a particularly troubling form of corruption that must be addressed."

The National Border Patrol Council also released a statement, which reads,

In April 2010, the NBPC executive committee members first learned about an official investigation related to travel vouchers submitted by Bonner. In response, the committee initiated an investigation into the matter. Shortly thereafter, the Committee determined there was sufficient reason to believe Bonner may have acted inappropriately and asked Bonner to step aside while the matter was being investigated by the grand jury. Bonner refused and said the committee did not have the authority to remove him from his elected position.

The statement continues,

The NBPC cooperated from the beginning of this investigation and knew it was necessary to take proactive measures to protect NBPC funds, such as: requesting multiple audits of the NBPC financial records; revising internal policies; eliminating questionable sections of the policies (e.g. gifts for spouses and direct-billed credit cards); adding additional layers of review for all expense vouchers; prohibiting a committee member from approving his/her own personal expense voucher; requiring advance approval from the executive committee for travel that was expected to exceed



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\$500.00; and finally, appointing a new Secretary/Treasurer.

Apparently, Mr. Bonner triggered the investigation by submitting reimbursement vouchers that covered a six-year period, according to the indictment. When reimbursement was denied by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Bonner filed a union grievance, at which point an investigation began involving agents from CBP Internal Affairs, Internal Revenue Service, and U.S. Department of Labor. The result of this investigation was the federal indictment.

However, Mr. Bonner has also released a statement claiming that he has been “thrown under the bus by the union,” that he is owed a lot of money by the department and the union, and that this investigation is nothing more than a case of “trumped up charges” for speaking out against the border policies of the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations.

Sources from the border patrol, both active duty and retired, have had responses covering the whole spectrum of emotion from anger to shock to disappointment to actual agreement with Bonner that the charges may be trumped up.

Upon examining the indictment filed by Duffy’s office against Bonner, several questions arise.

For instance, was Bonner thrown under the bus by the union, as he alleges, in order for the union to cover themselves (what many call “CYA”)?

If he truly is guilty, how did he manage to pull this off without anyone in the union taking notice? It’s not as if there were civilians involved who are untrained when it comes to sniffing out corruption when it’s right in front of them. These are well-trained and experienced agents.

Furthermore, why is Bonner’s alleged co-conspirator not named, when it is well known that Mr. Joe Bradley, also a retired agent, was listed for years as the Secretary-Treasurer of the National Executive Board on the union’s website?

And, why are the dates for his alleged misconduct listed as 2007-2010, while no data states a history or pattern prior to this time period? While that could be due to a statute of limitations issue, a pattern is still a pattern.

And an alleged mistress, and general vicinity of where this individual is from, is mentioned in the indictment, but as with the co-conspirator, this person is not named. Why not?

In light of these questions, does this prosecution seem like a witch-hunt to make an example of TJ Bonner for voicing his opposition to immigration policies on countless television and radio interviews as well as appearances as a witness before Congress?

Consider the hypocrisy of the fact that while Bonner is accused of having a mistress that he visits and purchasing hard drives to download pornography with union funds, sexual misconduct allegations have been made against top managers at the Border Patrol and Customs going back decades. Sources have informed The New American and our sister news outlet the Liberty News Network of complaints filed over the years that were ignored and whitewashed, and that subsequently resulted in retaliations against the whistleblowers.

In fact, several lawsuits were filed recently by top-level agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency against top Department of Homeland Security officials, including Secretary Janet Napolitano for sexual discrimination, as well as sexual misconduct and harassment by other top Napolitano appointees. There is clearly a pattern of sexual issues within DHS when one looks back over the years.



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Agent sources from CBP and ICE have reported a number of instances of sexual assaults, harassment, and even what they call “screw-up move-up” where managers offer promotions to subordinates by seeking sexual favors. These sources, who spoke under condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation, have referred to their managers as “sexual predators with badges.”

In 1997, the Miami Herald did a series of stories about such practices, which included well-known sex parties, adult toys left in employee lockers, and other incidents. These stories named Miami Port Director Jayson P. Ahern and Los Angeles/Long Beach Port Director Thomas S. Winkowski, who were “disciplined” by merely transferring one another to the other’s district. Sources report that in spite of this detailed coverage by the Miami Herald, the scandal was swept under the rug by Customs Commissioner Ray Kelly, who is now serving as Commissioner of the New York Police Department.

Ahern retired in 2008 as Deputy Commissioner of CBP, while Winkowski continues to serve as “Acting” Deputy Commissioner of CBP, which makes him Chief Operating Officer, under Acting Commissioner and former Chief of the Border Patrol David V. Aguilar.

Countless Customs sources have alleged that managers have engaged in such activities while on duty, on government time, in government facilities, with government credit cards, and have even been caught on government cameras in official government facilities. Yet, none of these officials are prosecuted.

In fact, El Paso Port Director David Longoria of U.S. Customs actually fathered a child out of wedlock with a subordinate employee and his punishment was being reassigned as Deputy Director of the El Paso Intelligence Center (or EPIC). This case was documented and filed in El Paso Court in a suit by a mother who was granted approval to terminate paternity rights and responsibilities.

Countless Border Patrol sources have reported similar allegations of “zipper problems,” promotions by the so-called “peter principle,” and the misuse of government credit cards against managers, including retired Chief Patrol Agent Carlos X. Carrillo and Victor Manjarrez, Jr.

Apparently the punishment for many of these “top dogs” is getting promoted, given these well-documented allegations.

Meanwhile, Bonner, a resident of Campo, CA, which is located along the U.S.-Mexico border, retired in 2011 after a career spanning 33 years in the patrol. He spent 22 years at the helm of the union serving as national president. He was in court on August 20 in San Diego for arraignment, and the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported that Mr. Bonner pled not guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jan Adler. His bond was set at \$100,000. Bonner was also ordered to surrender his personal firearms, which is a standard bail condition.

Photo of Terrence “TJ” Bonner: AP Images



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