

## *Special Report*

### **Votergate: More details emerge**

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December 1, 2004—Five Star Trust, the entity that, according to well-placed business and U.S. intelligence sources, is tied to the financing of a scheme to pay individuals posing as U.S. law enforcement and electronic voting machine technicians to rig the vote in favor of George W. Bush in at least four key states—Florida, Texas, Ohio, and California—represents a Byzantine network of offshore shell corporations and individuals tied to various Bush and Saudi-connected business enterprises.

Kevin Russell, a Nassau, Bahamas-based attorney representing Five Star Investments, Ltd., which maintains an office in Nassau and is the corporate entity that received a bank check for \$29.6 million that was allegedly associated with paying vote rigging technicians, claims the check has not yet been cleared for payment. In addition, Five Star Investments claims the money has nothing to do with election scamming. Sources familiar with the vote rigging have reported that some of those involved in the operation balked when they were not paid the amount of money they were promised for their services and began revealing the nature of their roles.

In 1997, the U.S. District Court for the Seventh Circuit affirmed the conviction of Robert L. Ferrera, an individual that court records indicate was connected to Five Star Investments, Ltd. Ferrera was convicted of fraud involving \$11 billion in counterfeit Mexican promissory notes. Ferrera claimed to be a general in the Mexican army and an official of the PRI party in Mexico. Judge George Marovich, at Ferrera's sentencing, said "there are aspects of this like the Over-the-Hill Gang." Moreover, the court proceedings referred to the case as "unusual." Ferrera and his associates used two shell corporations in their scheme, American Credit Corporation and Union International Bank and Trust, Ltd. of Grenada. In the case summary it is stated that Ferrera "assigned and delivered some of the Mexican notes to an associate in Lexington, Kentucky, who owned Five Star Investments, Ltd." According to information from the Internal Revenue Service, Tax ID Number 61-6234232 was issued to Five Star Trust, a Foreign Asset Protection Trust registered in the Isle of Man. Five Star Investments claims it has nothing to do with Five Star Trust.

Ferrera's name also surfaced in a 1994 Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of Northstar Investors' Trust of Bellevue, Washington. In that case, Grady Lewis Hand was indicted for a \$3 million investment fraud. However, Hand was defended by the former head of the Drug Enforcement Administration's secret "CENTAC" unit, Dennis Dayle. Hand and Dayle claimed the investment fraud was actually a CIA front to fund off-the-books intelligence operations being hidden from Congress. They said the money actually went to "General Robert L. Ferrera," said then to have worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA.

New information obtained from knowledgeable U.S. intelligence sources reveal that much of ex-Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos's billions of embezzled gold and money made its way into Five Star Trust, which was actually established in the late 1980s as a Houston-based repository for Marcos's ill-gotten loot. Some of the Marcos money was stashed in accounts in the Cook Islands, a dependency of New Zealand that has its own banking and corporation laws. Cook Islands accounts have been associated with some of the money used in the Votergate scandal.

Since the late 1980s, Five Star Trust has been supplemented by additional money from the Saudis. According to Houston sources, the trust has been extensively used by the campaigns of both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush. These sources also claim that the Saudis and Bushes use "Five Star" entities as vehicles to move large amounts of money for special purposes. Other names associated with this large Saudi-Bush multibillion dollar tranche are Five Star Group, Five Star Company, and Five Star LLC. The money used to move the money for the vote rigging was also said to involve accounts in Phoenix, Arizona and Houston.

The use of foreign nationals as election machine technicians on Election Day has also been confirmed. Sources with details of the vote rigging stated that some foreign nationals were involved in the reprogramming of Diebold and other machines in the four key states of Florida, Ohio, Texas, and California. The technicians successfully padded votes in Ohio to ensure that state's 20 electoral votes went to the Bush column. In populous counties in Florida, Texas, and California, the vote padding ensured that Bush's nationwide popular vote margin was well in excess of 3 million votes, giving him 51 percent of the national vote over John Kerry. One unsuccessful Democratic candidate in California voiced concerns about whether the alleged vote padding in his state affected his own vote count.

Vote padding for Bush's popular vote may have also been used in Maryland. Diebold ran a training program for volunteer election technicians on October 29, three days before Election Day, at a warehouse in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Volunteers were paid \$14 an hour for their services. According to a Diebold insider, U.S. citizenship was not a qualification to work on Diebold election machines on Election Day and the volunteers could have been assigned "anywhere in the state [Maryland] on Election Day."

Sources familiar with the Votergate scandal have stated that foreign nationals from Mexico, Brazil, and Russia were used to "fix" selected machines in critical counties and precincts in Florida, Ohio, Texas, and California. Moreover, some of these individuals have been associated with organized crime activity, including computer hacking, in the United States and abroad. Those familiar with the use of Diebold machines to commit voter fraud have revealed that the hardware and software used in Diebold machines used in casinos and polling places is essentially the same, including the back door used to dial in over telephone lines to change payoff odds in gambling machines. The same mechanism was used to change votes, the sources contend.

This is a followup to [Saudis, Enron money helped pay for US rigged election](#) and [More on the buying of electoral fraud by the Bush campaign](#).

*Thanks to members of the Democratic Underground for sending me news items, leads, contacts, and other relevant information.*

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