

New
Department

Politics From the Inside

Dole Drums

Phil Gramm's presidential candidacy is flagging so badly that **Charlie Black**, the campaign's senior political adviser and veteran GOP operative, is said to be ready to jump ship if the organization doesn't shape up soon. Worse still, **Ralph Reed** is saying privately that the Gramm candidacy is dead as far as the Christian Coalition is concerned.

Bob Dole, meanwhile, believes that the nomination is his—absent a late entrance by **Newt Gingrich**—and is already casting about for a running mate to enhance his planned “run to the center” strategy for the fall campaign. Topping the list: New Jersey Gov. **Christie Todd Whitman**, a pro-chooser and Christian Coalition critic. California's **Pete Wilson**, Ohio's **George Voinovich**, and former Joint Chiefs Chairman **Colin Powell** are also mentioned, but the early betting is on Whitman. Dole, who has a history of relying on strong women in his political organization, has long been taken with the idea of running with a woman: in 1988, he had his eye on then-Rep. **Lynn Martin** of Illinois.

Gingrich's plans notwithstanding, one late entrant seems poised to make the race: **Malcolm Forbes, Jr.** Two top staffers at Empower America are leaving that organization—which Forbes has heavily bankrolled—to start a presidential exploratory committee for the publishing executive. Forbes's move means that Empower America co-chairmen **William Bennett** (who has been heavily courted by **Lamar Alexander**) and **Jack Kemp** likely won't endorse any of the first tier GOP candidates out of deference to Forbes. □

Going for Broke

Bay State sources say popular Republican Gov. **William Weld** has decided to take on incumbent Democratic Senator **John Kerry** in what will be one of next year's most-watched Senate slugfests. With Kerrey's seat in play, Democratic hopes of regaining control of the Senate would be all but extinguished. Looking ahead to '98, Republicans are salivating about taking out all three senators—California's **Barbara Boxer**, Illinois's **Carol Moseley-Braun**, and Washington's **Patty Murray**—who were elected in the much-vaunted “Year of the Woman” and have proved lackluster in office. Washington's race will likely be an all-female affair, with GOP Rep. **Jennifer Dunn** planning a strong challenge. □

Budget Summit Climb

President Clinton's last-minute June budget gambit wouldn't have been possible had it not been for some back-door advice and data provided by Republican staffers from the Finance and Budget Committees. This after the same staffers associated with Senators **Dole**, **Packwood**, and **Domenici** began holding meetings to lay the groundwork for a budget summit with the White House that was to occur in late August—despite public denials from House and Senate leadership, and even the White House, that such a meeting would ever occur. The congressional budget intelligence, which included several rough-draft Republican alternatives to the current House and Senate GOP budget proposals, was passed along via intermediaries—former Democratic

staffers now working on Wall Street with ties to White House chief of staff **Leon Panetta** and Treasury Secretary **Robert Rubin**.

For the past several months, Domenici staffers had been pushing hard for negotiations in order to bolster their boss's chances of winning what is shaping up to be a tough re-election campaign in New Mexico. Packwood told staffers he would like a summit so that, if he decides to step down, he can go out in a blaze of glory—setting the federal budget toward fiscal responsibility. Moderate Dole staffers were involved—despite Dole's insistence that they play nice with his new conservative friends—in part to spite conservative newcomers to his Senate and campaign staff. □

Going for Burke

Sheila Burke, Bob Dole's long-time chief of staff, and quite possibly the most powerful woman in Washington, was quietly removed from the prestigious job of Secretary of the Senate in late May. She was replaced by **Kelly Johnston**, a respected conservative Senate staffer well-known on Capitol Hill. The Secretary post—the highest confirmable position in the Senate—oversees all administrative functions of the chamber. Burke's removal was a bone to conservatives who revile Burke for her years of working to undercut conservative legislative initiatives and her willingness to work with the Clinton White House on its legislative initiatives. There is talk that Johnston may also be given the chief-of-staff post as the '96 campaign draws near, but Dole does not

appear ready to politically behead his most trusted staffer.

While conservatives may be crowing, Burke remains a political and policy wild card who holds a grudge about as long as her boss does, and she privately remains Dole's main resource for advice on legislative issues. Watch for her to try to continue to muck up Republican welfare reform proposals and to push for a bipartisan budget agreement weighed heavily toward the Clinton ten-year budget plan. □

Lott's Lot

Anybody betting that current Senate Majority Whip **Trent Lott** will be handed the Majority Leader's job by his colleagues if Dole steps down, should pull his money off the table. Lott's support is soft, and the Senate's failure to move legislation at a pace approaching the House is being partially blamed on the man from Mississippi. Privately Republicans are encouraging **Don Nickles**, the low-key but ambitious conservative from Oklahoma, to mount a challenge to Lott. Nickles has told staff that he intends to do just that. □

Treasury's Aging Models

The Treasury Department continues to cook the budget and tax books, and shill for House Minority Leader **Dick Gephardt** before the Joint Committee on Taxation. But Republicans are catching on. In June, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury **Leslie Samuels** went to Capitol Hill, touting tax-revenue numbers generated using the Family Economic Income computer model—a static model created for the Ford administration to score tax legislation. The results, played up in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, were that the proposed Republican tax cuts would create record-setting deficits. Treasury continues to use the FEI model, even though Congress—at the request of former Ways and Means boss **Dan Rostenkowski**—dumped the use of the model for budget and tax purposes two years ago, because it was outdated and created wildly inaccurate numbers. When pressed by Ways and Means Chairman **Bill Archer** for a reason why

the Clinton Treasury Department insisted on using a scoring system no longer accepted as reliable even by Democrats, Samuels had no answer. But then telling the committee that Treasury used the model at the insistence of the White House wouldn't have gone over well anyway. □

Maryland Vote Fraud Revisited

The results of last November's gubernatorial elections in Maryland may be challenged in federal court. Republican **Ellen Sauerbrey** lost the race by an official count of 5,993 votes out of 1.4 million cast. A county circuit court judge threw out Sauerbrey's challenge last January, ruling that the evidence of fraud presented would not have been enough to influence the outcome of the election. She was able to show that 1,816 ineligible voters cast ballots in Baltimore November 8.

But Sauerbrey's supporters have continued to turn up fresh evidence to bolster their case. According to a comparison of Baltimore's official records by the pro-Sauerbrey group VOTER (Voters Organized Toward Election Reform), 5,832 more votes were tallied from voting machines on election night than there were voters who either checked in at city precincts that day or voted absentee. In the election night tally, Sauerbrey led for much of the evening until a still-unexplained halt in the count; when the count resumed, Democrat **Parris Glendening** was just narrowly ahead. (A subsequent report by the crusading Baltimore television news program at Channel 2 found there were 6,000 more votes cast than voters.)

Also in late May, Channel 2 News reported that voting machines in Baltimore city and Prince George's County were affixed with black key boxes in violation of state election laws. Ostensibly installed to make the machines easier to access in event of a malfunction, the keys allowed poll workers potentially to compromise the balloting. Traditionally only the precinct police hold such keys. **Sam McAfee**, warehouseman for the Baltimore City machines, has admitted that the local election boards in Baltimore and Prince George's—two of only three of the state's twenty-four jurisdictions that Glendening

carried—ordered the unprecedented changes.

Pressing the case has proved all but impossible in one-party Maryland. The attorney general ran on Glendening's ticket, and the U.S. attorney in Baltimore is a former top aide to Democratic Sen. **Barbara Mikulski**. The *Baltimore Sun*, the state's dominant newspaper, has toed the Glendening line, too.

The five-member Maryland election board, appointed by the former Democratic governor, has been stymied as well. The terms of the five members expired June 30; the chairman of the board, Glendening supporter **James Johnson**, managed to cancel the last meeting, scheduled for June 13, at which the board would have considered a motion to declare the November election invalid. The board is comprised of three Democrats and two Republicans; the motion would likely have passed, however, because one Democrat, **Margaret Crowder**, was ready to break ranks.

The final option now, according to lawyers who are studying the matter, is for Sauerbrey—or any Maryland voter—to go to federal court on a claim that fraud diluted their vote, thus resulting in unequal treatment. □

Slobodan's Show

Now we know why the Clinton administration hasn't been able to get anything done with Bosnia. Turns out its special envoy to the troubled territory, **Robert Frasure**, is having too good a time with Belgrade buddy **Slobodan Milosevic**. Frasure regularly meets Milosevic with the same offer: recognize Bosnia and Croatia, and the U.S. will lift sanctions against Serbia. Milosevic ignores the offer, but so that Frasure doesn't leave too disappointed, the Serbian president does a drop-dead imitation of Croatian counterpart **Franjo Tudjman** awarding himself medals of freedom. Frasure reportedly has laughed so hard that he once fell out of his chair. □

Ring Any Bells?

Which senior White House aide has taken to wearing makeup on his ear to conceal from the media that he wears an earring when off duty? □

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

The Arkansas Drug Shuttle

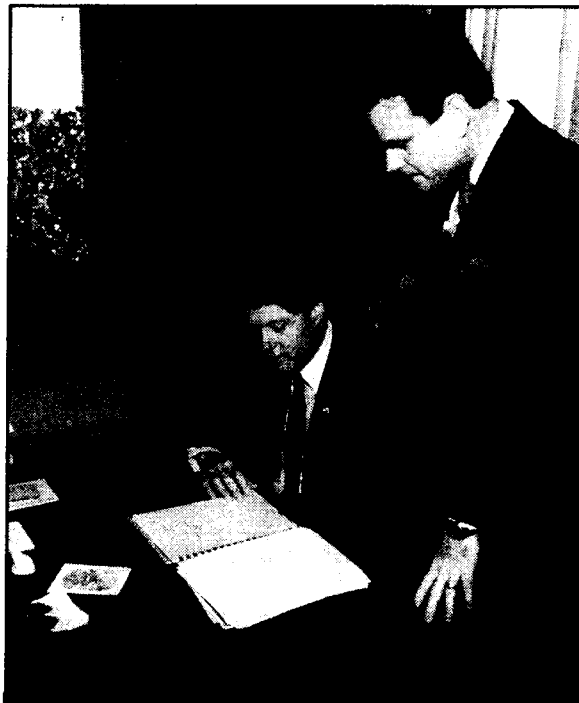
What L.D. Brown, Clinton's fair-haired boy, has told me.

Arkansas State Trooper L. D. Brown was 28 years old in 1984. He was not only Gov. Bill Clinton's favorite bodyguard, but also a close friend. The other troopers called him Clinton's "fair-haired boy." They shared an interest in books, ideas, and night life. Brown still has books that Clinton gave him, one being a bar exam study book in which the politician had made some ironic underlinings. One passage discusses the deductibility of charitable donations, and another the length of residency required in Washington before tax liability is incurred. Like Clinton, Brown passed through a radical stage when he attended the

University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Indeed, when Clinton was a law professor in Fayetteville, Brown was working on an off-campus magazine, the radical *Grapevine*.

In the autumn of 1984, Brown found himself seated on a bench inside a cavernous C-123K cargo plane roaring over a Central American jungle. The pilot of the plane was Barry Seal, a legendary drug trafficker. Two years later, he would be shot dead in Louisiana. Three Colombians eventually were arrested and convicted of the murder. The Louisiana attorney general would tell the Justice Department that Seal had "smuggled between \$3 billion and \$5 billion in drugs into the U.S."

The C-123K also had a history. It was originally an Air Force transport plane. Seal dubbed it "the Fat Lady." It would later be serviced and financed by Southern Air



Transport, a CIA front company, and it was eventually shot down over Nicaragua in a doomed supply effort to the Contras that left an American, Eugene Hasenfus, a prisoner of the Sandinistas and the CIA link to the Contras revealed.

Brown recalls that on the morning of this particular flight, Seal had told him to drive to Mena Intermountain Regional Airport, a remote air strip near the Oklahoma border. He had expected to find, he says, a Baron or King Air, the kind of plane in which he had sometimes accompanied the Governor, and in which he had some training as a pilot. Instead, he says, he found this "huge military plane" that was not

actually a military plane. It was dark almost black, and had only the minimal tail markings necessary for civilian operation.

Inside the plane, according to Brown, were another pilot and two "beaners"—common laborers who looked like Central American Indians. Later Brown would come to know them as "kickers." All were wearing jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers. Seal, Brown says, had also prescribed the dress code, and insisted that no one carry identification, not even keys or jewelry. Then, he started the engines, and Brown remembers, "This . . . I mean just thunderous noise. Scared the s--- out of me just taking off." Brown says that when the plane took off, he was sitting on a bench behind the two pilots. At the rear of the plane, by the beaners, he says, were palettes on casters.

After it left Mena, the plane made a refueling stop—"Nobody got off," Brown says—and then resumed flight. Eventually, Brown recalls, Seal startled him by yelling, "Well, you all hang on." Then the plane dropped to what

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