

Elephants and Donkeys by Vin Berg

James Baker III: Eledonkey

James A. Baker III, White House chief of staff and head of the President's prophylactic "palace guard," is, of course, a Republican, but one on intimate business and personal terms with leading Democrats who despise the President. Baker is an old friend and business partner of Robert S. Strauss, who headed Jimmy Carter's Democratic Party. During October 1980, when Strauss was Carter campaign manager and Baker was number-two Reagan campaign manager, he and Strauss formed a partnership for an Anheuser-Busch beer distributorship in California.

Recall that after Strauss met with DNC chief Charles Manatt and others to launch the "Briefinggate" scandal against the President, and James Baker III's name came up as possible recipient of the fabled briefing-papers, Strauss leaped to Baker's defense and said, oh no, it was CIA director William Casey. It is the Democrats who claim the papers were stolen; Strauss, on the other hand, could have *given them* to whomever he chose.

Old Houston families

Strauss and Baker, of course, are old friends because they are both millionaire Houston lawyers of the old-family tradition. It was in May 1867 that Albert Pike, the Grand Commander the U.S. southern branch of London's Scottish Rite Freemasonry, dedicated to the destruction of the United States, launched a project to bring "Order out of Chaos" by introducing the Scottish Rite into Texas. One of the original Galveston members was a man named Austin Clay Baker. In June 1867, a lodge was established in Houston; original members included lawyer W. Brown Botts.

In 1872, Judge Baker, a veteran of the rebellion against the American

Union, moved to Houston and became a key figure in Botts's law firm, soon renamed Baker & Botts. The principal client of Baker & Botts in its early days was robber baron Jay Gould.

By the turn of the century, Judge Baker's son, Capt. James Addison Baker, was running Baker & Botts. The title "Captain" came not from military service, but from a position in the Houston Light Guards, an elite men's social club.

Captain Baker made his mark by representing the estate of William Marsh Rice in a sensational New York murder trial. Rice, a multimillionaire Houston cotton trader and investor, died in New York in 1900. Captain Baker got his valet to admit he poisoned Rice in collusion with opposing lawyer Albert T. Patrick, and returned to Houston in his private railway car even wealthier, thanks to the will he had drawn up for Rice. Rice Institute, today known as Rice University, was provided by the will with \$10 million when instruction began in 1912—with Captain Baker as chairman of the board.

Captain Baker also helped Jesse Jones take control over Houston banking during the Panic of 1907. Jones used the panic to buy up large hunks of several local banks; he was opposed by the president of the South Texas National Bank, but the chairman of the board, Captain Baker, overruled the president. Jones became the dominant force in Houston banking and later headed FDR's Reconstruction Finance Corp.

Baker & Botts fell to his son, James Addison "Jim" Baker, educated in true elitist style at Hill School, at Princeton, and then the University of Texas Law School. After World War I, he married Bonner Means Baker, a Bonner of the Humble oil field. Her great-uncle John Hugh Means was governor of South Carolina "when the first shot was fired at Ft. Sumter." Their first son was James Addison "Jimmy" Baker III, today of the White House.

In April 1976, after a brief stint in the Commerce Department, Jimmy Baker became the Ford campaign's chief delegate hunter. After the Kansas City Republican convention, Ford fired Rogers Morton and replaced him with Jimmy Baker as campaign manager. Baker balanced Ford's budget: Ford lost the election but had money left over; Robert Strauss's friend Jimmy Carter won. Ford, some thought, might have won if Baker had spent any money.

Even so, Baker became campaign manager for George Bush in 1980. By May 1980 Ronald Reagan was clearly the front-runner, so Baker held a press conference—without telling George Bush—to announce that Bush was dropping out of the race. Bush's campaign collapsed, but he became Reagan's running mate and Baker became White House Chief of Staff.

Covering up for Madame de Menil

In an interview with the pro-terrorist French daily *Liberation* on April 20, 1984, Madame Dominique Schlumberger de Menil of Houston confirmed her role as the patron of Muslim Brotherhood terrorism internationally, conceding that she is a "Sufi mystic."

On Oct. 10, 1981, *EIR* had warned that a gathering of Muslim Brotherhood members planned at Madame de Menil's Rothko Chapel in Houston was a terrorist planning event. This was relayed to the White House to keep visas from being issued to terrorists on their way to the Rothko event. An investigation was started, but then stopped, and the conference went ahead. Three days earlier, Mme. de Menil went to a state dinner at the White House.

Could someone from Houston, Texas with influence in the White House have been responsible for covering up for Madame de Menil?