

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

John Gavin, one of the 'bad guys'?

Did the American ambassador to Mexico protect drug traffickers, or just violate Mexico's sovereignty?

Recent revelations appearing in the Mexican press have given us a closer glimpse of the dark side of former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico John Gavin, currently an executive of the Atlantic Richfield company in Los Angeles, California.

EIR has documented in previous issues how Gavin dragged the United States into one of its worst diplomatic fiascos by trying to resurrect the National Action Party (PAN) as a political weapon against the Mexican political system. We also noted at the time that the leaders of the PAN in the state of Sonora—where Gavin's mother lives—were associated with or financed by bosses of the drug trade in the Mexican northwest. It is noteworthy that Gavin never once made reference to these drug-trafficking barons, but on the contrary, pointed to various government officials as involved with drugs—taking great care, of course, never to mention officials with whom he was associated, despite clear indications of their corruption.

A small piece of Gavin's dirty laundry was aired by journalist Carlos Moncada in three consecutive editions of the Sonora-based daily *Diario del Yaqui*, Nov. 3-5. Moncada reveals that then-Ambassador Gavin personally intervened with the Sonora judiciary to clear U.S. citizen Mary Kathryn Ford of charges of murdering her husband, Cruz Davison, in 1985. Ford was being held in a jail in the border city of Nogales at the time.

As it turned out, Mary Kathryn

Ford was the niece of former President Gerald Ford, and her parents, important businessmen from southern California, are the owners of the San Diego Padres baseball team. Ford's parents apparently contacted Ambassador Gavin, the U.S. consul in Hermosillo (capital of Sonora), and the governor of Baja California Norte, to solicit intervention on their daughter's behalf.

Gavin managed to get a new defense lawyer for Ford, in the person of Sonora lawyer Rogelio Rendón, a partner and political ally of former Sonora governor Carlos Armando Biebrich. Biebrich, closely associated with the current interior minister, Manuel Bartlett Díaz, and with his deputy minister, Fernando Elías Calles, was forced to resign his gubernatorial post in November 1976, the result of widespread protest over the assassination of several farmers in the area.

Rendón's fame does not stem from his law practice, but rather from his "talent" in winning political and judicial favors by organizing parties with top call girls and plenty of quality "snow."

According to Moncada, there exists a taped telephone conversation in which Rendón happens to mention to the judge hearing the Ford case, Luis Cuevas Macías, that the governor of Baja California Norte, Leyva Mortera, spoke with Sonora governor Rodolfo Félix Valdez to express his "concern" over the case. Félix Valdez

turned the case over to the president of the Sonora superior court, Valderrain Otero, who also happened to have been a high-level official in the Biebrich governorship!

Valderrain used his power, in turn, to replace Judge Cuevas Macías, who had not yielded to the pressures to free Ford. However, the new judge was equally resistant to twisting the law in favor of the woman, and he too was replaced. Finally, the right judge was found. One Sergio Hernández wasted no time in finding the charges against Ford "insubstantial," and ordered her release. She was immediately transferred to the Mexico-U.S. border and set free on U.S. territory. Ford has not to this day returned to Mexico, despite judicial appeal entered against Hernández's decision.

The incident stirred all of Sonora, and exposed former Ambassador Gavin not only for unacceptable violation of Mexico's national sovereignty, but for his ominous association with corrupt, treasonous, even criminal elements within Mexico.

In fact, Biebrich is known as a partner of the jailed former police chief of Mexico City, Arturo "El Negro" Durazo Moreno, and of Francisco Sahagún Baca, currently a fugitive from justice for having been a conduit for the drug trade. A brother of Biebrich, José, was publicly accused of smuggling drugs while Biebrich was governor of Sonora.

Biebrich's power derives from the protection he receives from Interior Minister Bartlett, who is praised and promoted in Washington and on Wall Street as the next President of Mexico.

Journalist Carlos Moncada had barely finished his article on "Dirty Gavin" when his columns were abruptly interrupted, and he was transferred outside the country to prevent any further exposés on the thorny subject.