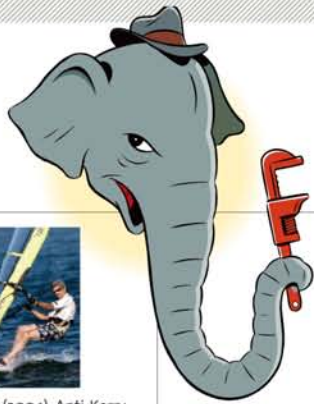


Meet the Attack Lads



Dirty politics has been around since Thomas Jefferson's oppo researchers went after Alexander Hamilton's mistress in 1800, but there's more money in it these days. With campaign expenditures hitting record levels—nearly \$1.2 billion was spent in 2004, much of it channeled through shadowy independent-expenditure groups, 527 committees, and the like—those schooled in politics' darker arts are cashing in like never before. And for the off years, there's always corporate marketing and "grassroots lobbying," which increasingly employ the tricks of the campaign trade. Here are some key players from years past, and their current allegiances. —Stephanie Mancimer



Rats ad (2000): Subliminally flashed the word "RATS" amid a description of an Al Gore prescription-drug proposal



Windsurfing ad (2004): Anti-Kerry spot claimed that senator "surfs every direction on Iraq."



Willie Horton ad (1988): Connected Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis to murderer/rapist who escaped during a weekend prison furlough



Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (2004): Smear campaign claiming John Kerry lied about his service in Vietnam. FEC fined the group \$299,500 for violating election laws.



Phone jamming (2002): Robo-call scheme organized by top GOP officials to tie up Democrats' get-out-the-vote phone banks in heated New Hampshire Senate race. Four officials indicted, three pled guilty, one convicted of a felony.



Harold, call me! (2006): TV spot featuring actress claiming to have met Tennessee Democratic Senate candidate Harold Ford Jr. at a Playboy party



Voter Caging (2004): Challenging voters' registration if they don't take delivery of a registered letter; used to suppress minority votes in Florida and elsewhere

COMMISSIONED BY Progress for America/PFA Voter Fund: Established in 2001 to build support for Bush's "agenda for America"; PFA created 527 committee Progress for America Voter Fund in '04 to get around campaign-finance limits. Voter Fund raised \$45 million in 5 months, 70 percent of it from just 13 donors (including Dawn Arnall, cochair of predatory lender Ameriquest Mortgage). Caught sharing staff with Bush/Cheney '04; fined \$750,000 for raising money from prohibited sources.

CREATED BY

National Media Inc: Production firm headed up by **Alex Castellanos**, whose credits also include the anti-affirmative action "White Hands" spot for Jesse Helms in 1990. Made ads for former Ohio Governor Bob Taft that were so misleading, they got the campaign reprimanded for violating state election laws. **CORPORATE CLIENTS:** Verizon, AT&T, Pfizer

FOUNDED BY

Tony Feather: Pal of Karl Rove's since 1974. Former head of Missouri GOP; political director, Bush/Cheney 2000.

CONTRACTED WITH

Tom Synhorst: Former field coordinator for R.J. Reynolds; worked on "adults only" marketing campaign that aimed to increase youth smoking by portraying tobacco as forbidden pleasure. Helped Bob Dole beat George H.W. Bush in '88 Iowa caucuses.

NOW WORKS FOR

FOUNDERS OF

Feather Larson Synhorst: Direct mail, telemarketing, and fundraising shop that specializes in "microtargeting" voters and building Astroturf support for corporate lobbying. Raked in nearly \$27 million from GOP groups and candidates, including Bush/Cheney, in 2004. **CORPORATE CLIENTS:** ExxonMobil, General Motors, NRA, AT&T, National Federation of Independent Business

CREATED BY

McCarthy Marcus Hennings: Home to **Larry McCarthy**, creator of Progress for America Voter Fund's "Ashley's Story," which showed Bush hugging the daughter of a 9/11 victim. **CORPORATE CLIENTS:** Fox TV, The Washington Post Company

CONSULTING BY

Chris LaCivita: Decorated ex-Marine; headed National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) during phone-jamming scandal. Took over as president of Progress for America after Tony Feather stepped down to work for Bush/Cheney '04.

WAS RUN BY

Edmund Matricardi III: Former Virginia GOP head who pled guilty to a felony in 2003 for illegally wiretapping Democrats' calls

LINKED TO

OFFSHOOT OF

DCI Group: Lobby shop founded by Tom Synhorst and two other tobacco veterans; firm's computers were linked to the YouTube climate-change spoof *Al Gore's Penguin Army*. **CORPORATE CLIENTS:** Lockheed Martin, GM, Verizon, ExxonMobil, AT&T, United Airlines

ORCHESTRATED BY

James Tobin: As RNC regional director in '02, put New Hampshire GOP in touch with telemarketing firm that helped orchestrate phone jamming. Sentenced to 10 months in prison, but verdict overturned on appeal. Tobin is set to be retried this winter.

WORKED WITH

Charles McGee: Former head of New Hampshire GOP who originated phone-jamming scheme; now runs Spectrum Monthly, a Republican direct-mail firm

ORIGINATED BY

Scott Howell: Apprenticed at the RNC under Lee Atwater in the 1980s, then became political director of Karl Rove's firm in Austin. Worked for Senator Saxby Chambliss' (R-Ga.) 2002 campaign, which produced ad suggesting Dem incumbent and triple Vietnam War amputee Max Cleland didn't have "courage" to fight Osama bin Laden.

CREATED BY

Terry Nelson: Political director for Bush/Cheney '04. Named in prosecution of Tom DeLay for allegedly helping launder illegal corporate donations through national party. Was also James Tobin's boss during New Hampshire phone-jamming scheme. Helped produce "Harold, call me!" while head of RNC's independent expenditure unit in 2006.

FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER FOR

Mercury Public Affairs: New York-based firm specializing in "high-value public affairs," including image management, polling, and "grassroots coalition building" **CORPORATE CLIENTS:** AT&T, Pfizer, Wal-Mart (which dumped firm after furor over Harold Ford ad)

LINKED TO

Tim Griffin: Former assistant to Karl Rove and head of RNC opposition research in 2004. Appointed interim U.S. Attorney for Arkansas in 2006; resigned six months later when linked to Justice Department political-firing scandal. Former Alberto Gonzales assistant Monica Goodling told Congress that Griffin was involved in caging during the '04 election.

