


DID THE ENSIGN CONFRONTATION OVER HIS AFFAIR TAKE PLACE AT A “FAMILY” GATHERING?

 As I linked to unwittingly in a past post, journalists are particularly interested in Tom Coburn’s take on John Ensign’s affair because they live together.

Reporters mobbed Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, who shares an apartment with Ensign on Capitol Hill. "I’m not answering any Ensign questions," he announced. "You can ask all you want."

That home, of course, is where Doug Hampton claims a confrontation about Ensign’s affair occurred in February 2008.

Citizen92 asked a very good question in a past thread—where John Ensign and Tom Coburn share a place together.

I searched and the Hamptons didn’t own property in DC (city). Neither do the Ensigns. Neither do the Coburns. At least under their own names. Any ideas who owns the Coburn-Ensign pad? Or are they renters?

To which I asked whether or not Ensign and Coburn are members of The Family.

The Family, as Jeff Sharlet has reported, is a secretive fellowship that aims to mobilize pseudo-Christian issues to accrue power—what he described "a good old boy’s club blessed by God."

They were striving, ultimately, for what Coe calls "Jesus plus nothing" – a

government led by Christ's will alone. In the future envisioned by Coe, everything – sex and taxes, war and the price of oil – will be decided upon not according to democracy or the church or even Scripture. The Bible itself is for the masses; in the Fellowship, Christ reveals a higher set of commands to the anointed few. It's a good old boy's club blessed by God.

As Jeff has reported, the Family owns a C Street house in which—at least as recently as 2002 or 2003—Ensign lived.

The brothers also served at the Family's four-story, redbrick Washington town house, a former convent at 133 C Street S.E. complete with stained-glass windows. Eight congressmen—including Senator Ensign and seven representatives—lived there, brothers in Christ just like us, only more powerful. We scrubbed their toilets, hoovered their carpets, polished their silver.

And in his book, Jeff reported that Coburn lived in the house when still a Congressman.

The rules forbid Brownback to reveal the names of his fellow members, but those in the [prayer] cell likely include some of the men with whom he lived in the Family's C Street House for congressmen: Representative Zach Wamp of Tennessee, former representative Steve Largent of Oklahoma, and Senator Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, then a representative ...

In other words, the Ensign-Coburn "home" is either still that C Street house, or a place they've moved to together after having both lived in the home owned by the Family in the early 2000s.

Well, so what? What's the significance of the

possibility that this confrontation took place at a gathering of members of "the Family," aside from the obvious hypocrisy?

I was interested because, if you believe Hampton's letter was part of a veiled threat to Ensign, then his description of the confrontation may be designed to implicate others beyond Coburn (whose mention may have been a coded reference to invoke their Family-connected home). Here's what Hampton said:

The unethical behavior and immoral choice of Senator Ensign has been confronted by me and others on a number of occasions over this past year. In fact one of the confrontations took place in February 2008 at his home in Washington DC (sic) with a group of his peers. One of the attendee's (sic) was Senator Tom Coburn from Oklahoma as well as several other men who are close to the Senator. Senator Ensign's conduct and relentless pursuit of my wife led to our dismissal in April of 2008. I would like to say he stopped his heinous conduct and pursuit upon our leaving, but that was not the case and his actions did not subside until August of 2008.

Hampton mentions not just Coburn, but "a group of his peers ... several other men who are close to the Senator." Which might be his baseball team, or it might be members of the Family. And Hampton goes on to describe his worries about harm to his family.

The actions of Senator Ensign have ruined our lives and careers and left my family in shambles. We have lost significant income, suffered indescribable pain and emotional suffering. We find ourselves today with an overwhelming loss of relationships, career opportunities and hope for recovery. Our pursuit of justice

continues to place me and my family in harm's way as we fear for our well being (sic).

While the fears could stem from simple Nevada hardball politics, it might also stem from losing ties to a network of power like the Family.

I don't know the answer to the question—aside from the fact that both Coburn and Ensign at least used to live in the house owned by the Family. But it might explain the omerta surrounding Ensign's affair.