

JACK BLUM'S CLIENT GOES TO WIKILEAKS

A man about to go on trial in Switzerland for breaking that country's secrecy laws has promised to give details of 2,000 individuals and corporations who are hiding their money in offshore accounts to Wikileaks tomorrow.

The offshore bank account details of 2,000 "high net worth individuals" and corporations – detailing massive potential tax evasion – will be handed over to the WikiLeaks organisation in London tomorrow by the most important and boldest whistleblower in Swiss banking history, Rudolf Elmer, two days before he goes on trial in his native Switzerland.

British and American individuals and companies are among the offshore clients whose details will be contained on CDs presented to WikiLeaks at the Frontline Club in London. Those involved include, Elmer tells the *Observer*, "approximately 40 politicians".

Elmer, who after his press conference will return to Switzerland from exile in Mauritius to face trial, is a former chief operating officer in the Cayman Islands and employee of the powerful Julius Baer bank, which accuses him of stealing the information.

That's interesting enough. But I'm equally interested because of who Elmer's lawyer is: Jack Blum. Blum explains why Elmer has resorted to leaking this to Wikileaks.

"My understanding is that my client's attempts to get the banks to act over various complaints he made came to nothing internally," says Elmer's lawyer, Jack Blum, one of America's

leading experts in tracking offshore money. “Neither would the Swiss courts act on his complaints. That’s why he went to WikiLeaks.”

Calling Blum, “one of America’s leading experts in tracking offshore money” doesn’t convey the degree to which Blum’s investigations—perhaps most famously of BCCI—exposed the ties of the very powerful to corrupt money. After Blum’s Senate investigation of BCCI got too close to the Democratic fixer Clark Clifford, he was fired; he had to bring his work to NY’s DA and the press to reveal what he had found.

In a book review for HuffPo last year, Blum described how important it is to map the networks that run our world, yet noted that doing so has gotten more difficult since he first started investigating such things.

When I came to Washington 45 years ago to work as an investigator for the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee, a senior investigator with years of experience told me that the beginning of any good investigation was a clear understanding of the players. “Everyone you will look at has a history,” he explained. “They will have mentors and sponsors. They will have networks of political and business connections. They will play many roles. If you understand those, everything else will fall into place.”

The advice was sound and has served me well in years of investigations of corporate wrongdoing, organized crime, money laundering, and securities fraud. My career highlights include serving as Special Counsel to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and before that as Assistant Counsel to the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee followed by work as a private lawyer representing victims of financial crime and financial institutions on compliance matters.

Despite the desperate need for such an investigative approach, throughout my career I have been constantly perplexed by the reception to it. A frequent response by newspaper columnists and pundits was to dub me a “conspiracy nut.” Another common response was to call my evidence “anecdotal,” a word uttered with a dismissive sneer.

[snip]

The approach of looking to the roles, activities, sponsors, and networks of players—be they organized crime figures, politicians, experts, influencers, or some combination thereof—is today, more than ever, imperative. Profound changes in government and society have vastly increased the opportunities for agenda-bearing players wearing multiple hats (and often working in close-knit networks) to significantly influence public policy. Such activity is much less transparent to the public eye than when I first began my career. An amazing variety of corporate entities with strange and complex interrelationships today do much of the work of federal government, virtually substituting for it in some arenas. These entities and their sponsors are harder to identify, more insidious, and much more plentiful than the corporate fronts of yesteryear.
[my emphasis]

It says something, I think, that the client of a guy who has gone to such lengths to expose the corrupt money running our world is going to Wikileaks.