

WHITEWATER RAFTING? NEW ORLEANS FILM FESTIVALS? WHAT BOONDOGGLES WILL NYPD'S COPS GO ON NEXT?

Remember that NYPD officer who scammed a whitewater rafting trip by claiming he needed to count how many times a day some college students prayed while on vacation? He wasn't the only one scamming such vacations. As the AP reports in its latest installment on the CIA-on-the-Hudson, in precisely the same period, another NYPD officer was scamming a trip to New Orleans to document the collaboration of anti-globalization, racial profiling, labor, and immigration activists.

If possible, the tie between the NOLA meeting and NYC was even more remote than that between whitewater rafting Muslim students and the city. The mentions of NYC in the report include the addresses of local chapters of groups represented at the meeting. And it uses a game of connections—ultimately tied to demonstrations against the Sean Bell killing by NYPD cops or to May Day celebrations (both, of course, completely protected speech)—to tie those groups back to NYC.

Activists from the Jena Coalition and Critical Resistance were in attendance and presented several documentaries based on the alleged racial profiling and the alleged injustices that people of color faced across the country by their respective police departments. The New York Chapter of the Critical Resistance is located at 976 Longwood Ave Bronx, NY.

Critical Resistance was formerly located

on Atlantic Ave near Clinton Ave (confines of the 77 Pct) and at the time was being lead by Ashanti Alston (former Black Panther and Animal Rights Activist). The group hosted events prior to the 2004 Republican National Convention and was raided by the NYPD for selling alcohol to minors.

Members from the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement NYC Chapter along with Critical Resistance and members of the Sean Bell family will attend the outcome of the Sean Bell case as well as a demonstration scheduled for Friday April 25, 2008. The demonstration will be held at the Queens DA's office located at 125-01 Queens Boulevard to await the judge's verdict.

And, as it turns out, the cop reporting his boondoggle trip to NOLA actually misrepresented what he was spying on.

In April 2008, an undercover NYPD officer traveled to New Orleans to attend the People's Summit, a gathering of liberal groups organized around their shared opposition to U.S. economic policy and the effect of trade agreements between the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

When the undercover effort was summarized for supervisors, it identified groups opposed to U.S. immigration policy, labor laws and racial profiling. Two activists – Jordan Flaherty, a journalist, and Marisa Franco, a labor organizer for housekeepers and nannies – were mentioned by name in one of the police intelligence reports obtained by the AP.

[snip]

[Flaherty] said the event described by police actually was a film festival in

New Orleans that same week, suggesting that the undercover officer's duties were more widespread than described in the report.

Flaherty said he recalls introducing a film about Palestinians but spoke only briefly and does not understand why that landed him a reference in police files.

And that's it. That's all it took the NYPD to be conned into paying a cop's trip to NOLA for a film festival attended by a bunch of people supporting perfectly legal political issues.

After paying for whitewater rafting and film festival trips, I wonder what kind of swank vacations the NYPD has paid for since?