

## Does 'U.S.' stand for Uncle Sam, or Uncle Sucker?

by Charita M. Goshay

Are you a crook?

If so, you are dumb.

D-u-m-b.

Why risk being shot, or landing in lockdown for 10 years, when the government is doling out more money than a man can spend in lifetime?

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security issued a report accusing FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, of shelling out more than \$3 billion to Katrina contractors with bad credit and companies whose bookkeeping systems resemble a corn maze.

Despite promises to the contrary, no-bid contracts still are being passed out like strip-club leaflets to big-dog contractors who heavily contribute to the GOP.

The report comes after word in March that FEMA blew \$40 million when food purchased for disaster-relief victims spoiled because the agency had no way of keeping it cold. Perhaps they should have stored it in those brand-new, unoccupied FEMA trailers still sitting in the mud near the Mississippi-Louisiana border.

Taxpayers who were calling Katrina flood victims scum for looting the Wal-Mart, seem to hold little contempt for the white-collar chicanery currently siphoning billions from their wallets.

But wait, there's more.

NOW YOU SEE IT...

Remember how you were taught that money doesn't grow on trees?

That because it falls out of the sky.

Earlier this year, we learned that the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq made it "rain" in the desert when it showered \$12 billion in unaccounted-for, U.S. grade-A dollars, onto a war zone.

Some bureaucrat who makes more money than you, decided that because Iraq's banking system is such a shambles, it would be easier just to hand people cash.

In some cases, American contractors were given duffel bags stuffed with shrink-wrapped \$100 bills.

Now, as far as I know, there's no "duffle-bag income" line on the Internal Revenue Service tax form, but I may have overlooked it.

It goes without saying that the \$12 billion vanished quicker than a rabbit under a hat. A leaked memorandum from the Coalition Provisional Authority theorized that it was taken by hook and crook, namely, via "corruption and waste" and "ghost" employees hired by Iraqi ministries operating under provision authority. Really?

Here's the cool part, criminals: Rarely do politically connected contractors or officials in the upper echelons of government get fired, go to jail, or even get called on the carpet, no matter how colossal their screw ups. (see: Accomplished, Mission).

In fact, many go on to write books, teach college, or hit the speaker circuit, where they command five-figure fees to tell us what we already know: It's all former President Bill Clinton's fault.

## THE RAP ON RAP

Rap-music impresario Russell Simmons is challenging rap artists to avoid using certain profanities in their songs, namely "ho," "n --" and "b --."

Love it or hate it, rap is an art form. The average person could no more write a decent rap lyric than they

could perform surgery.

Some rap is created by people, who, in any other art form, would be lauded as geniuses.

But the geniuses aren't the problem.

Profanity-dependent rappers won't change their tune until pressure is applied on those record-company owners who benefit more from the music than the people who make it.

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