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Finding Gannon

BY TIM GRIEVE



WAR ROOM

We love watching Scott McClellan work as much as the next guy -- but apparently not quite as much as Jeff Gannon once did. Documents just released by the Secret Service show that Gannon/Guckert visited the White House more than 200 times between 2003 and early 2005, attending 155 of 196 press briefings but also showing up many times when the president and much of the press corps were somewhere else.

Raw Story has the story and a glimpse at the documents. The documents come from the Secret Service, which turned them over to Reps. John Conyers and Louise Slaughter in response to a Freedom of Information Act request the two Democrats filed.

On a first read, the documents raise a few questions that we'd like to see McClellan address. First, if White House day passes -- and the abbreviated security check that goes along with them -- are meant for the occasional use of reporters who don't need a permanent "hard" pass, why was Gannon allowed to use such day passes more than 200 times in less than two years? Is anyone else allowed, in effect, to turn a day pass into a "hard" pass, or was Gannon alone in his near-constant day pass access?

Second, in the post-9/11 world, is it too much to ask that the Secret Service keep track of who is coming and going at the White House? As Raw Story notes, the Secret Service security logs produced to Conyers and Slaughter contain some days where Gannon appears to leave the White House never having arrived in the first place. On other days, Gannon is shown arriving but not leaving. Maybe it's just sloppy bookkeeping, but how hard can it be to get this stuff right? The White House isn't exactly Grand Central Station, and the Secret Service checks everyone who comes and goes. Is there a reason other than ineptitude for missing many of Gannon's entries and exits? And if it's just ineptitude, what is the president going to do about that?

-- Tim Grieve