

THOMAS: Dubya's suicides

George W Bush's theory that the hand of God guided his Presidency could perhaps explain the number of strange deaths which have befallen potential enemies of his administration. Leaving plane crashes, accidents, and unsolved murders to one side, let's, in honour of the recent resurgence of interest in Dr David Kelly's demise, take a quick look at some of the other apparent suicides which have silenced Bush's opponents.

Researchers critical Bush of the family frequently succumb: the Lord, it would seem, looks after the entire dynasty. The foremost of these, J.H Hatfield, overdosed in June of 2001 in the wake of the explosive publication of *Fortunate Son*, his biography of 'W'. Bush-obsessed artist and researcher Mark Lombardi was found swinging from his studio in 2000. Gary Webb, an investigative reporter who uncovered the CIA's involvement with crack cocaine dealers in the 80s, managed to shoot himself in the face – twice! Danny Casolaro, in the midst of an expose of the first Bush presidency, cut his wrists a dozen times in 2004, though not before completely disposing of his manuscript and notes for the book he had boasted “would bring back the head of the Octopus”).

'Madam to the elite' Deborah Jeane Palfrey hung herself whilst awaiting sentencing on Federal convictions pertaining to her escort agency after threatening, in the event of a prison sentence, to substantiate her repeated inference that then-Vice President Dick Cheney was a former client (Senator David Vitter and former State Department official Randal Tobias were already established 'Johns').

Raymond Lemme, the Florida official in charge of investigating the election-rigging charges of Clint Curtis (who claimed to have been asked to write an undetectable computer programme which could transfer votes in the 2001 election), cut his wrists before he could announce the fruits of his investigations – which, he claimed, had “tracked the corruption all the way to the top”.

In an incident with parallels to the case of Dr. Kelly, senior US Army biodefence researcher Bruce Ivins, posthumously indicted by the FBI for those post-9/11 anthrax attacks, also took his own life, as did two other state microbiologists in the final three months of 2001. This veritable wave of suicides was similar to the one which rolled through Enron executives prior to the House Commerce and Energy Commission investigation (including Vice Chairmen Cliff Baxter, whom some anticipated as set to testify to a vital link between the corporation and Bush administration).

Finally, one might mention the strange case of Margie Schoedinger, who filed allegations of rape against W in 2000 (missed that one? Media blackout!), in which it was noted that “the Defendant [George Bush] also informed the Plaintiff [Margie Schoedinger] that his only option to assure his never having to answer for the previous contact would be to simply see Plaintiff pressured to the point of committing suicide.” By means of prayer, no doubt. The Lord's answer, as ever, was emphatic: Schoedinger committed suicide by shotgun (a very rare method for female suicides) before the case could come to trial.

Suicide is still relatively rare, occurring in just 17 to 20 persons in every 100,000. Could this anomalous preponderance in Bush's foes provide statistical proof of divine favour?