

# Bill Hundley: He's Tongsun Park's Lawyer

Post 3/9/78 A Reputation for Prowess in the Courtroom Draws the Big-Name Clients

By Tom Zito

William George Hundley, once lawyer to Richard Nixon, John Mitchell and W. Dale Hess and now legal counsel to Tongsun park, proffers this gem to would-be barristers:

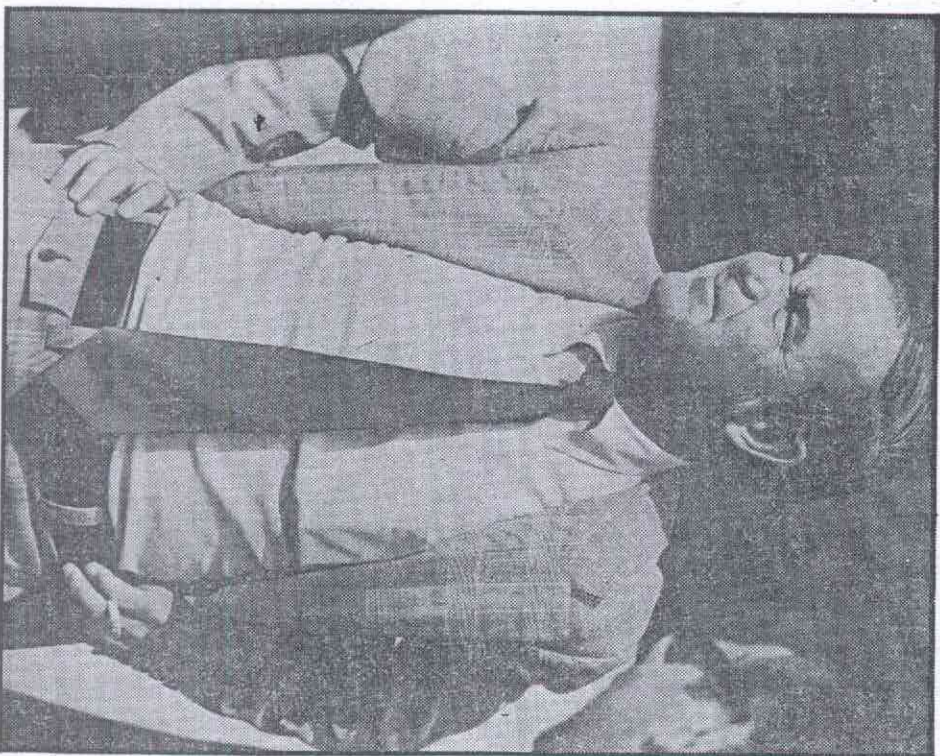
"Most of the guys you defend as a criminal lawyer are criminals. The one thing you can never do is go into business with any of your clients. That's the best way to get into trouble."

Hundley is sitting in the Palm Restaurant here, where his visage adorns one of the walls. "They used to have Nixon's face on the same wall," he says, laughing very hard. A waiter comes up with a pair of straws and asks, "Will you be needing chopsticks tonight, Mr. Hundley?" More laughter.

"Oh, this Korea stuff," he sighs, downing another gulp of red wine and lighting another Parliament, trying to get his mind off the current testimony of client Park before the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

"I've been through this Goddam story 97 times," Hundley says. "Park was just a businessman who was trying to protect Korean rice interests. I've heard his story in Korea—horrible fight over there, 14 hours. I've heard it at his place in the Dominican Republic. I've heard it at my office and now I'm hearing it over again. The only reason for a lawyer to be around in a situation like this is to make sure a guy doesn't perjure himself.

"I tell you, Tongsun is a hell of a guy. Very bright. When he was a student at Georgetown . . . He came from a very devout Presbyterian family . . .



William Hundley, 1974, by Ellsworth Davis—The Washington Post

Well, the Jebbies didn't like that, and they tried to convert him, wanted him to be a priest. They knew a golden opportunity when they saw one. So they said to him, "Tongsun, you know there's no cardinal from Korea now. You could enter the priesthood and become a cardinal." And Tongsun said to them, "Cardinal? How about Pope?" [Great laughter] He's a hell of a guy."

That's the way Bill Hundley is. Almost everybody is a hell of a guy to him, and he's never at loss for a good yuck. While cross-examining Howard Hunt during the Watergate trials, Hundley, who was John Mitchell's attorney, asked Hunt about the \$100,000 he demanded of the White House before he went to prison. Hunt denied that it could be considered blackmail.

"What did you consider it," Hundley replied. "Investment planning?"

Now 52, Bill Hundley's biggest complaint is that he doesn't have enough time to spend with his wife and children at their Vienna home. He runs his fingers through his thinning hair, and points out that the time he's spent on the Park case has also cut into his tennis game and the amount of reading that he can do (mostly newspapers and magazines).

"Bill is like a very effective legal Will Rogers," says former associate Tom McKeon, now the vice president of Interrel, one of the world's largest private intelligence organizations. "He's never met a guy he didn't like."

He also rarely has met a lawyer who didn't respect his prowess. During the Watergate investigations, when it appeared that then Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen would come up against Hundley as Mitchell's lawyer, Petersen remarked

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# William Hundley, Lawyer

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to a friend, "If I were in trouble, I'd want Bill Hundley to represent me." Petersen has since become one of Hundley's law partners.

Hundley himself pooh-poohs his own abilities. "I'm just a little Irish kid from Brooklyn," he says. In high school, he masterminded other students' political campaigns and was a hot-shot on the basketball court. "My two brothers are engineers. I wasn't smart enough to be an engineer, so I went into the service. I never met a protestant or a Republican until I got in the military. I had a bad eye, and I was so stupid that I covered up the same bad eye twice to make sure I got in. It was awful to be 4-F back then. That was our last popular war."

After returning from the war—where he fought with the 87th Infantry in the Battle of the Bulge as a ser-

geant in a machine-gun section—Hundley converted his GI benefits into a law degree from Fordham. "I guess I was a Catholic then," he says. "Now, I'm not so sure. I loved Pope John, but the incumbent Pope I'm not so crazy about."

Hundley clerked at a Wall Street law firm for a year, and then joined the Justice Department in 1951, where he served in the Internal Security Division. "I can't believe all the time we wasted chasing Communists," he says. "If it wasn't for all the FBI informants, nobody ever would have paid any dues into the Party or bought The Daily Worker."

Later he became a hot prosecutor for Justice. "It's easier wearing [the prosecutor's white hat," he says, "but it's awful, some of the things you see. I remember when we got Keogh the Brooklyn judge found guilty of ac-

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cepting a \$35,000 bribe], and his wife was crying in the courtroom and you start wondering what you're really doing. I'm much more comfortable keeping people out of jail than putting them in."

Hundley's outspoken nature annoyed some people in Justice, including Robert E. Kennedy, who booted him upstairs after he publicly admitted that the FBI was bugging telephones. He also tended to become more concerned about some of his charges than most Justice officials. "You have to develop finks in that business," he says. "When (Joseph) Valacci decided to cooperate, I became his gumba. We'd put dark glasses and wigs on him and take him to the Roma restaurant. He was a hell of a guy. They were constantly shifting him around and the last time I saw him before he died he was in a prison in Texas. My days with Valacci

convinced me that the Cosa Nostra was the most overrated thing since the Communist Party."

In 1966, Hundley left Justice to work as a lawyer for the National Football League.

"My wife was the only good thing to come out of my Commie-hunting days," he says. "She was a secretary there." Hundley and Bobbie England were married in 1958, and they now have six children.

"Every guy who's a criminal lawyer will tell you he's looking for something else to do," he says. "I'm telling you that I'm gonna have four kids in college at once, and this is the only way I can afford it. I told my wife, if I ever die, put my wallet on the grave, 'cause that way the kids will be sure to visit me."

After the NFL, Hundley worked for a brief time with another Justice associate, Robert Peloquin, the founder of

Intertel. "Bob is a real gumshoe," Hundley says. "I can't find a haystack, much less a needle. So I went into private practice."

"Your name gets around in this business. People see you in court and they think you're good. There's a lot of theater in it. You only remember the good ones, the wins, not the losses. You have to go after the loopholes. In libel, you never try to prove truth. You show lack of malice. With a guy like Tongsun, you try to keep a low profile. We get up there on the Hill and then head over to the Monocle and try to have a quiet lunch. Of course, a lot of people notice him. I figure, at least the guy has been given immunity. At least I won't have to visit him in jail. I've spent almost as much time as my clients at Allenwood, you know, they have a place there called the Hundley Wing. I've had six clients there at once."