

Press Clips

by Alexander Cockburn

THOSE PRESENT at a recent seminar of investigative journalism at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. heard Jack Anderson make some confessions. When he took over from Drew Pearson, Anderson said, he did a deal with Hoover. So long as his column did not dump on Hoover, he would be able to request FBI file data on people of interest to him. These would be delivered on plain sheets of paper. If he wished to see the actual files he could do so at the FBI headquarters in the presence of his contact man there. Anderson also said that he initially had the same sort of arrangement with Nixon's people at the White House. A high aide (one might conjecture, Haldeman) would make damaging data available to him, such as the IRS audits on George Wallace's brother, with which the Anderson column made great play. This connection did not last much longer than a month or two.

Anderson says the arrangement soon broke down when he began printing material hostile to Nixon. He then incurred the attention of the Plumbers. According to Seymour Hersh the plumbers were "all over" Anderson and his associates. But Hersh had no mention of this in his two long and interesting articles in the New York Times last week. I asked Brit Hume, at that time an associate of Anderson, what he thought about this. Hume said there had been no evidence of break-ins or even of taps. "My guess," he added, "is that they were afraid to tap in case the news got back to Anderson through White House contacts." Who can tell? Maybe Anderson's famous blooper about Eagleton's drinking habits was a White House plant to make him look foolish.

DIRECTORS OF THE CIA fear assassination or physical molestation, not by agents of a foreign power but at the hands of their own underlings. Furthermore they fear it even inside headquarters at Fort Langley, Virginia. This surprising news is revealed in an article by Juan Cameron in this month's issue of Fortune.

Cameron, the Fortune bureau chief in Washington, is profiling the personality and policies of James Schlesinger, now Secretary of Defense. As recently as last January, it will be recalled, Schlesinger was made head of CIA in place of inveterate Nixon-hater Richard Helms, who was fired. Schlesinger immediately purged 1000 of the CIA's estimated 1600 employees, most of them from the old guard loyal to Helms. "At one point," Cameron remarks, "animosity toward Schlesinger grew so strong that his personal bodyguard was increased to prevent any violent confrontations with disgruntled agency employees."

Civil war in Fort Langley? I rang Cameron. "Well," he said laconically, "those old guard types were pretty wild." "What old guard types?" "You know, the Harvard and Yale men who came in after the war. Many of them had probably killed people in the course of their lives. Also they had people like Hunt and McCord around." How heavily is the director guarded? According to Cameron you have to pass through a guardroom to get to the director's office. Also Schlesinger not only had the usual armed driver, but an extra bodyguard. His house was guarded too.

It is thought that Colby, the present director and former secret operations man, has less to fear from his subordinates than Schlesinger, who was regarded as Nixon's agent. Cameron added that there is speculation that Schlesinger's portrait, which now hangs alongside the other ex-directors in the main corridor, may be slashed or at least an insulting label affixed to its neck.

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