Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-go-round —With Les Whiten

WASHINGTON — Not even Richard Nixon, perhaps as puritan a President as ever occupied the White House, could escape the sex watch of the late J. Edgar Houver

Hoover. Buried deep in the FBI director's secret blackmail files was a story of an illicit love affair between Nixon and a Chinese woman.

During Watergate's darkest days, no one accused Nixon of a romantic indiscretion. His worst enemies considered him to be untainted by sex scandal.

But an FBI agent in Hong Kong dug out a report, admittedly unconfirmed, of Nixon's involvement with a beautiful Chinese woman during a visit to the Far East for his law firm in the 1960s.

The word had seeped throughout the FBI that Hoover wanted to know about the peccadillos of the powerful. His minions, therefore, gathered gossip and passed it up to the cantankerous old FBI chief.

He kept the juiciest tidbits under lock and key in his personal custody. Since these files contained slanderous reports having nothing to do with law enforcement, the only possible purpose for their existence was blackmail.

for their existence was blackmail. Even in faraway Hong Kong, an FBI agent assigned as a legal;attache was on

> the alert for stories to pass on to Hoover. We have agreed not ot identify the agent, because he is now involved in dangerous work. Any mention of his name could jeopardize his life.

jeopardize his life. We can report, however, that the agent learned about Nixon's alleged amourette and made a veiled reference in a letter. He may have been extra cautious because at the time he wrote the letter, Nixon was already reigning in the White House.

Later a second letter came from Hong Kong laying out the whole story. The letter stated that Nixon reportedly had consorted with the Chinese beauty, who was much younger than himself, during a Hong Kong stopover on a business trip. The agent made no claim that he had any solid evidence to back up the story. In fairness, the agent wasn't merely pandering to Hoover's thirst for scandal. The agent was also concerned that Nixon, as a former Vice President, could be compromised in a place like Hong Kong. For the city was then a hotbed of spying and intrigue.

spying and intrigue. The report on Nixon's alleged indiscretion was accompanied by a newspaper photo, showing Nixon with the woman and her husband. Long after the incident, according to our FBI sources, Nixon helped the couple gain

admission to the United States. There is no evidence, however, that he got them any special preference.

any special preference. We reached the former Hong Kong agent who refused to comment on the incident. We also tried without success to get a comment from Nixon's office in San Clemente. But friends say it is "unthinkable" that he would ever have been unfaithful to his wife, Pat.

The important issue, however, was Hoover's use of the FBI to blackmail the nation's elected leaders. Sources close to the old G-man say he would have let Nixon know he had the Hong Kong story. It would have been a friendly, subtle approach, they say, with Hoover claiming he wished only to protect Nixon from the misuse of the information. Hoover used this line, according to our sources, to let dozens of key officials

sources, to let dozens of key officials know that he was aware of their secrets. This may help explain his extraordinary success in working his way in Washington.

The FBI conducted a field investigation of Nixon in 1937 after he had applied to become an FBI agent. The file wound up in Hoover's safe after Nixon rose to power in Washington.

Nixon rose to power in Washington. The FBI chief held similar files on other Presidents. In an earlier column,

we reported some of the details that Hoover had collected about the sex life of the late John F. Kennedy. Our sources saw nothing derogatory in

our sources saw nouning uerogatory in the file on Lyndon Johnson. But they understood that tapes and memos once existed concerning Johnson's back-door activities. There were also reports on his alleged flirtations with younger women on Capitol Hill.

Some of this embarrassing material, as we reported in an earlier column, was removed from the files and sent to him at the White House. Again, this was done as a friendly gesture, but it was a sophisticated form of blackmail.

HEADLINES AND FOOTNOTES: The lower courts have ruled that Richard Nixon's controversial presidential papers belong to the people and that he should not have the right to decide what should be withheld from publication . . The General Services Administration forecasts that it will take 100 workers about three years and six months to "make the Nixon tapes and documents available for public access." This will cost roughtly \$7 million . . At San Clemente, Nixon is going ahead with his memoirs. The first volume, which will give an overview of his presidency with emphasis on foreign affairs, won't be ready until 1977. tavut ut the JUllimics.