

NYT 12/18/81

Ex-Watergate Burglar Wins A Libel Award Against Paper

MIAMI, Dec. 17 (AP) — A Federal jury today awarded E. Howard Hunt \$650,000 in damages after deciding that the former Watergate burglar and Central Intelligence Agency employee was libeled by a newspaper article that linked him to the assassination of President Kennedy.

The damages were for a 1978 article, headlined "C.I.A. to Nail Hunt for Kennedy Killing," that appeared in *The Spotlight*, a weekly newspaper owned by Liberty Lobby, a conservative group.

Mr. Hunt said he suffered a \$27,000 drop in income after publication of the Aug. 14, 1978, article, written by another former C.I.A. agent, Victor Marchetti, who was not a defendant in the suit.

The article, referring to a pending Congressional investigation, said in part, "In the public hearings, the C.I.A. will 'admit' that Hunt was involved in the conspiracy to kill Kennedy." Mr. Hunt testified that the article was not true and that he was in Washington when Kennedy was slain in Dallas.

"We don't believe he was involved," countered Miles McGrane, attorney for Liberty Lobby. "What the article said was that he was going to be made a scapegoat by the C.I.A."