

Hughes arg/ what sought at Dem Hq - 12/10/73 reporting

In all the reporting of the break-in I recall no meaningful identification of what files had been entered. There were accounts indicative of the general nature of those particular files but no specific identification. It would seem that beginning with the original police investigation this should have been noted. In what I have seen of the FBI reporting (Gray hrgs include some), it did not report this.

Then, on tonight's net TV news, there is the story that it was Larry O'Brien's Hughes files as they relate to Nixon's brother, ostensibly because he came across something when he represented Hughes.

If this reporting is correct, it seems more likely there is some kind of trickery afoot, for none of it seems reasonable.

It is easier to believe that those Cubans told the truth or that they were aimlessly looking for dirt.

It is not easy to believe that a paranoid Hughes would arm O'Brien knowing what there is that is already available about him and Nixon.

It is easier to believe that original memos Hughes wrote Maheu was the target. At least they and other things like them are more reasonable.

The committee muffed two chances to go into this. After the second, in July or August, I wrote what I believed then it was participating in covering up. All that I used was printed and in my files. Maheu had leaked. Hank Greenspun had these memos. Jack Andefson had or had seen copies. And there is ongoing litigation in which all of this can come out anyway. So, if I have no doubt Hughes hearings can titillate, and should, I don't think that the break-in could have been in quest of those documents or others like them.

There had been an attempt to burglarize Greenspun's safe, about the Labor Day weekend of 1971. McCord, interestingly, had testified to get dirt on Democratic candidates or on Muskie, based on what he had been told. What makes this interesting is that this was a close enough description of some of the contents of the safe. But it was not really bad stuff. There was some material on Muskie. What is more interesting is that the safe held Greenspun's Hughes files. And the plan supposedly included use of a Hughes plane for escaping.

If, as I understood the account to say, it was based on ~~my~~ papers filed in court today, then the probability is that the committee knows what it is saying and doing. From what was reported, however, it doesn't make sense. Another possibility is that the committee has swung on a low curve. Anything that could kick back on it now could help Nixon some. The committee's self-concept may be hurting a little by now, so it might be a little over-anxious. There is no way of knowing how much of what was public before the break-in it knows. If anything.

This kind of story can be used by GOPs to allege that Dems did the same kind of dirty work only they didn't get caught at it.

If anyone besides a Diddy designed the operation, it does not seem probable that they would have gone for this kind of story or would have expected to find that kind of material at Dem Hq. If O'Brien got it as alleged, because of his previous Hughes connection, he would have been more likely to have had it elsewhere, probably in a safe box. It is not easy to visualize a Mitchell going for this kind of explanation of the need for a break-in. Nor is it easy to believe that if he were the pushed on the project he would have believed that if O'Brien had such files we would leave them around in the files of the party, where anyone could see and use or misuse them.

I would conjecture that there is something that did not meet the ear and eye on tonight's broadcast.

HW 12/10/73