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Republican

Watergate Whitewash finally spelled out Weisberg 9/9/72

This morning's Post reports Justice Completes Watergate Probe". The grand jury is expected to report in 10 days. Or, too late for trial before the election even if the lawyers do not stall. And it will involved former official of the WH and Recept. Committee. It is explicit that the rap will be pinned on Liddy ^{and} Hunt as "self-starters". And, of course, the derring-do FBI has done its usual "exhaustive" job. So has the US attorney, who failed to call the photographer who developed the pictures of an earlier breakin.

Bernstein and Woodward avdid news management in their signed story, much of which is devoted to how it was accomplished, from a source close to the investigation, "several persons familiar with the Justice Department's criminal investion", etc. With the FBI explicit in refusing comment on anything, even if it had completed its report, this limits pretty much to parts of the Justice Department, where sources permit direct and paraphrase quoting and reporting but not by name.

It tells how involved organizations' officials first preserved silence and then, when they saw "the coast was clear", started leaking. "It was the political people who were doing the leaking", according to this directly-quoted source.

B and W say on their own without saying what it might mean, "Many of the leaks sought to picture two men implicated (Hunt and Liddy)...as irresponsible 'self-starters' entirely capable of bizarre political projects of which their superiors would disapprove."

No doubt the reason nothing was done to Liddy for making off with \$114,000?

On their own the FBI ~~report~~ investigation is described as "aggressive" and complete.

But at

~~But~~ that the same time they say it was ordered to stay away from campaign-law violations. Traced the money from Houston, etc., but no law-violations investigation in that areas.

It is also explained how there will be no explanation of no other explanation, in the words of "one official": "Unless some of the people on the inside track comes through we may never get the whole story."

Thus "handicapped", the never-failing FBI, inevitably, will fail: "...FBI agents were not able to learn positively (Emph added) the exact objective in the Watergate break-in - though there is no question that intelligence gathering was at least a major part of it."

And thus, on "the evidence", according to one source, "we're pretty much at the end of it."

New picture of the non-TV FBI: no solutions to crimes without confessions!

This is a formula in which everyone comes out roses. Who can even blame the "political people" if they wait until "the coast is clear" before they say anything, "leak" to the press? And hasn't the press waited until the end, when it is too late, to let the people know there was this news management to which is was privy and part? When it is too late for the reader to put it in context, when the press had been a central part of the whitewash, it says without so saying that there was one and it makes itself look good by reporting it- out of context and after it had done the harm that has been done.

There is no reason why this could and should not have been done at the outset, instead of just accepting what it was spoon fed and pretending this spoon-feeding was its own diligent probing and reporting. (I can recall but one story that I can with any certainty feel was not leaked by somebody: AP's going to the expenditures records.)

It will be a surprise if all the central details have not been published because of the desire of the guilty to have them published, to the end that when the charges are finally filed they will soar like a lead balloon.

This had all been spelled out earlier. It was clear before Nixon spelled it out by saying nobody now employed was involved. Any review of what has appeared shows the care taken with the leaking to condition the press and the people and to protect the guilty, the "political people". As the Post now says and as was obvious, the White House was privy to what the FBI was doing, developing and not developing, and knew at every point what to say and not to say. It thus knew before the convention "that there was no evidence to indict (note this is not to say involve) current administration officials or present employess of the Nixon re-election committee."

Gray says.

If this was a skilled news-management operation, it was also a very obvious one. The failure of the press to expose it makes it culpable, in my view. If there is an obvious explanation in the people manging the news also seeming to control it, that does not absolve the papers. They had the responsibilities to dig and to report, and the news management is at least as significant a story as the facts reported and those that were and could be hidden only because of the press.