

'THIS MAN IS

WATERGATE burglar Frank Sturgis revealed for the first time this week the identity of the man he believes to be Deep Throat. "He is Robert F. Bennett, a Howard Hughes executive and former C.I.A. agent," Sturgis told *The Star* in an exclusive interview.

Sturgis also told in detail of the events that led up to the role played by Deep Throat in the destruction of Richard Nixon's presidency. Deep Throat was the code name given to the mysterious informant in the Watergate investigation by Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

According to the reporters, in their best-selling book (and movie), *All The President's Men*, Deep Throat corroborated much of their findings and steered them to new and damaging evidence against the Nixon Administration.

Woodward, who dealt with Deep Throat, has refused to disclose the man's identity. For more than two years, it has been one of Washington's biggest mysteries — and guessing games.

"Bennett was Deep Throat and he was acting on orders from C.I.A. boss Richard Helms who was determined to bring Nixon to his knees," Sturgis told *The Star*.

Sturgis, 51, a trained C.I.A. agent who was imprisoned for his role in the Watergate drama, claimed that Nixon was a victim of an undercover attack by Helms.

"However, if Richard Nixon had won his struggle with Helms and got his way there would have been an awful can of worms opened up that would have exploded all over the world," he said.

The initial clash between Nixon and Helms came in 1971 when the President demanded to see vital files held by the C.I.A.

"Helms refused and it was for that reason that Nixon fired him. But the files were absolute dynamite," he told *The Star*. "The files concerned Cuba, Castro and the Kennedy assassination.

"My information is that those

Watergate burglar Sturgis names the mystery man in *All The President's Men*

Star
exclusive
by Steve
Dunleavy

DEEP

THROAT'

files, and I'm sure they are still in existence, prove that John Kennedy entertained thoughts of an assassination of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

"And the files prove almost certainly that Fidel Castro was involved in a plot to kill President Kennedy.

"They also prove that the Russians knew that a Kennedy assassination plot was in the wind.

"And they also show that past administrations had acted to cover up the whole assassination and Cuban mess.

"Richard Nixon, a man who

was Vice President when the Bay of Pigs invasion was planned, had a fair idea what was in those files.

"Helms refused to hand them over, actually putting himself above the President and warning him that the files were far too explosive to be seen by anyone except him.

Enraged by Helms' arrogance, Nixon fired him in 1972 after the Watergate break-in, said Sturgis.

"And that unfortunately was a big mistake for the President. Nobody can beat the C.I.A.," said Sturgis.

That is where Deep Throat came in.

Robert Bennett, a 43-year-old son of a Republican senator from Utah, was a loyal and dedicated C.I.A. undercover man.

"His front was the Mullen Corporation in Washington, which had five employees and ten secretaries and appeared to be a public relations outfit," said Sturgis.

"Well, of course, it was just a C.I.A. front. Howard Hunt worked there for about six months before joining up with the Watergate plumbers, the break-in team.

"Helms and the C.I.A. knew of the plumbers as all of us at

one time or another had worked for The Company (the C.I.A.)

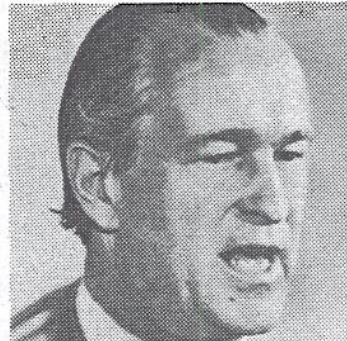
"There was no problem until the President started talking about implementing the Huston plan, which was to be an internal intelligence outfit that would have cancelled out the C.I.A.

"Helms used to boast that he had been with the C.I.A. since its inception.

"He knew he was going to be axed but he was determined that neither Nixon nor anybody would get those files. Heads would have rolled all over. Those files show the most monstrous cover-up imaginable.

"The Watergate break-in, which I took part in, gave Helms the excuse he needed.

"He put the whole plumbers operation at Nixon's door. He



C.I.A. chief Richard Helms: Kept files from Nixon.

knew what we were doing. Knew everything about us but, using Bennett to leak stuff to Woodward, he painted Nixon as the villain.

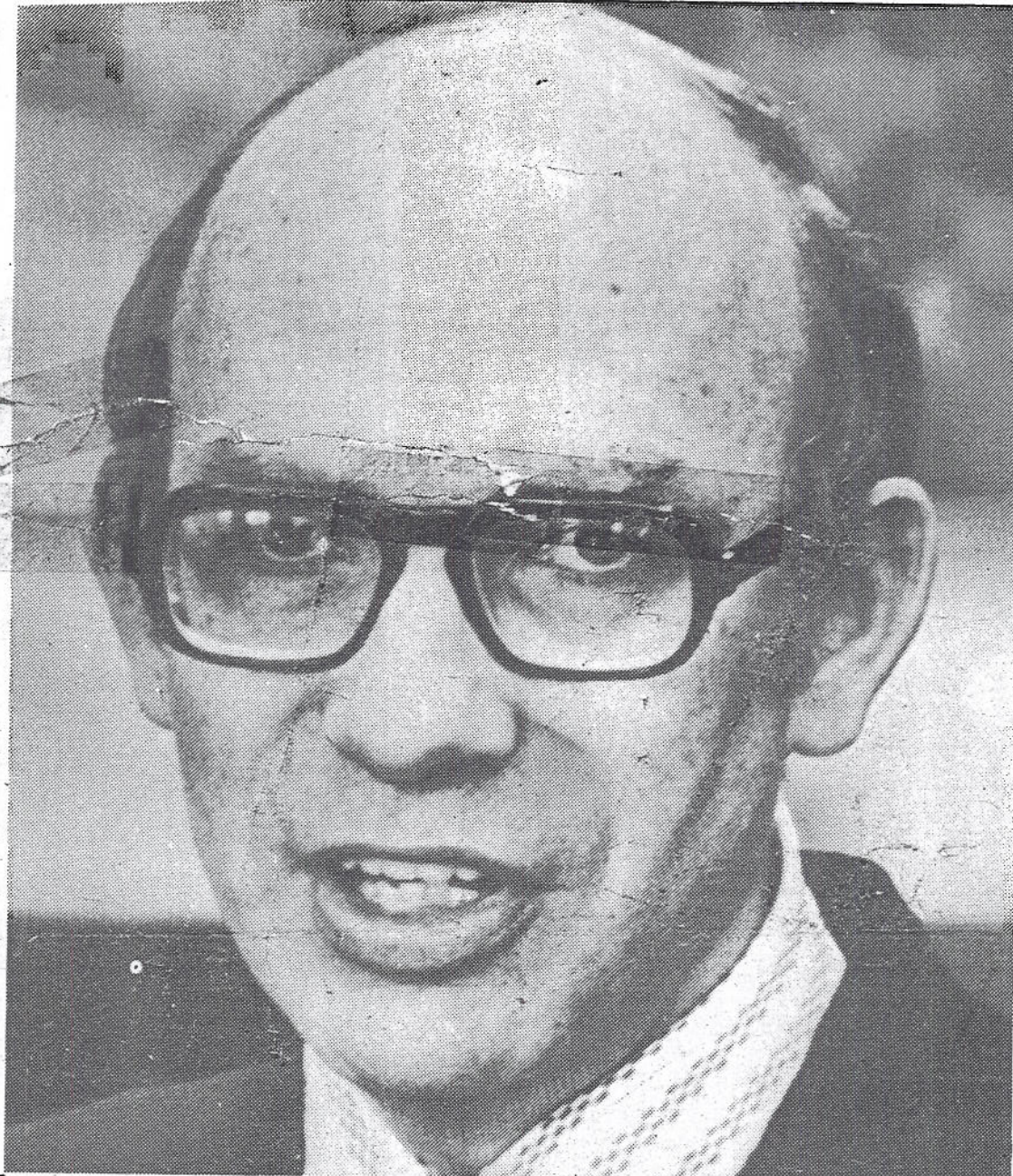
"Think back to all of Woodward and Bernstein's writing and recall just what sort of a light Helms was shown in.

"Bennett was going to give them all the stuff they needed, but his job was to protect The Company and Helms."

In secret testimony, before a House sub-committee, Bennett admitted that he had talked to Woodward on several occasions. But both he and the prize-winning reporters categorically deny that Bennett was their furtive informant.

Before the Special Subcom-

'CIA boss Helms was behind plot to bring Nixon to his knees'



Robert F. Bennett:
Loyal undercover man.

The man named. He says: 'I am a good friend of Bob Woodward'

mittee on Intelligence, headed by Representative Lucien Nedzi, Bennett admitted knowing reporter Bob Woodward very well.

He said: "Bob Woodward of the Washington Post interviewed me at great length on numerous occasions.

"I have told Woodward everything I knew about the Watergate case, except the Mullen Company's tie to the C.I.A.

"As a result I am a good

friend of Woodward."

However, one thing is significant.

Woodward has never bothered to confirm or deny the many names mentioned as candidates for Deep Throat. His lone exception to that rule occurred when Bennett's name was first mentioned publicly.

"Bennett," said Sturgis, "is the only man that Woodward took time off to absolutely deny was Deep Throat. He protested too much."

The files detailing plot and

counter-plot to assassinate Castro and President Kennedy have not been seen by Sturgis in full.

"But I have contributed to much of them," he said.

It was Sturgis who two weeks ago in *The Star* produced strong proof that the Government in 1964 had information that Jack Ruby, killer of Lee Harvey Oswald, had met secretly with Fidel Castro two months before the Kennedy assassination.

Robert Bennett, a Mormon, now works for the Summa Corporation in Las Vegas, which is the umbrella company running the empire of the late Howard Hughes.

"Let's be frank, I'm on Nixon's side because I think he was a victim, but I must confess that Bennett and Helms did a superb job," Sturgis said.

Sturgis said that he has information from his contacts that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had full knowledge of the knife job that Helms and Ben-

nett were doing. "Let's look at the record," said Sturgis. "Helms gets mixed up in the mess and suddenly Henry organizes a fat job for him as the Ambassador to Iran.

"Bennett, whose cover was blown, now has one of the biggest jobs in Hughes' outfit.

"There are two others who were involved too. General Alexander Haig, although he didn't take part in the job done on Nixon, knew about it. He is safe and sound as the com-

mander of the armed forces in Europe.

"Then there was Alexander Butterfield, the former deputy assistant to President Nixon.

"For an allegedly loyal aide, he almost broke his jaw with the speed in volunteering information about the existence of President Nixon's tapes, which he knew would be damaging.

"He was the man who disclosed the tape business. Later he became head of the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington. They looked after their own.

"Meanwhile, the Watergate seven went to jail and Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy are still rotting inside."

Sturgis credited President Nixon with determination in his quest to get the vital files.

"For instance, Jerry Ford knows better than to start looking for them," said Sturgis. "He knows you just can't win against them.

"Perhaps if the timing had been a bit better, Nixon might have been able to get them.

"I'll tell you this from what I know is in those files: it could have given Richard Nixon a very valid excuse to invade Cuba if he had wanted to.

"Both Helms and Bennett took the position that President Nixon couldn't be trusted with the files. You can't set yourself above the President. It's crazy.

"Before taking his stuff to Woodward and Bernstein, Bennett did a pretty good job on other parts of the media.

"He convinced the reporters that the C.I.A. knew nothing about us. Jeez, I've been associated with Intelligence for 25 years. Helms had to admit that in the end.

"Helms and Bennett knew they were playing with fire. I mean they knew that a lot of it would rub off on the C.I.A.

"But it's a little like an elephant getting a jab with a pin. The main thing was to destroy Nixon and make sure nobody saw those files."

Reporter Woodward told *The Star*: "Bennett as Deep Throat is just not right.

"I've talked to him on a number of occasions in gathering news, but the idea of him being Deep Throat is not logical."

This week I spoke to Mr. Bennett at his Las Vegas office by telephone. I asked him if he was Deep Throat.

Mr. Bennett said: "I wish I

was. There is a lot of money on the lecture circuit for him, and a lot of money waiting for him when he decides to write his book. No, unfortunately I am not Deep Throat."

Was the Mullen Corporation a C.I.A. front? "The truth is simply this. We provided a cover for one agent overseas, and that is all. As the Rockefeller Commission correctly found, we were a very legitimate public relations organization.

"However, give one man a cover overseas and you find yourself spending the rest of life explaining yourself, like I am doing right now.

"People keep on referring to me as a rich corporation executive. The truth is I am in charge of public relations, and that's all. I am not a C.I.A. agent or anything like it."

A well-known author and former congressional investigator agrees with Sturgis' revelation of Deep Throat.

He is Professor Richard H.



Frank Sturgis: "You can't win against the C.I.A."

Popkin, Professor of Philosophy at the Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, author of the best-selling book on the Kennedy assassination called *The Second Oswald*, and a top source of information for Washington congressional committees. He said:

"Mr. Bennett served his masters pretty well.

"He was obviously acting under instructions. He was in the field to protect the C.I.A. and to protect the Hughes corporation.

"That Mullen Corporation which he ran very skillfully was an amazing organization. They transferred huge amounts of money for the C.I.A. to finance their operations overseas.

"Yes, I'm convinced that Mr. Sturgis is right. Mr. Bennett was Deep Throat indeed."

BOOKS PROVIDE FURTHER EVIDENCE

TWO books by authors associated with the Watergate investigation support Frank Sturgis' allegations against former CIA director Richard Helms.

Fred D. Thompson, minority counsel to the Senate Watergate committee, documented in his book *At That Point In Time* many lies told by Helms.

He also said flatly that CIA

files on the Bay of Pigs investigation, when turned over to the Nixon White House, had vital documents removed from them beforehand.

John Ehrlichman, Nixon's Chief of Staff, in his novel *The Company*, tells of a CIA director who resorted to blackmail after discovering that the White House had set up its own ama-

teur spy operation. The CIA chief then destroys an assassination report in the CIA files, arranges for a "safe man" to replace him in the agency, then goes off to become an ambassador.

In real life, Richard Helms became ambassador to Iran after being removed as head of the CIA.