

The Watergate Winners

Cloud With Lining of Silver, Gold—and Green

By Jules Witcover

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It's often said with great somberness that Watergate is such a pervasive debacle that the whole country is the loser. That, it turns out, is not precisely true.

It's also often said that every cloud has a silver lining, and for some, Watergate has been silver, gold—and green. What has meant disgrace and shame for some has brought fame and fortune to others, and the promise of even greater glory down the road.

At the top of the list is nearly everybody's new folk-hero, "Uncle" Sam Ervin, the North Carolina senator and old country lawyer who is chairman and star performer of the Senate Watergate hearings.

At age 76, Sen. Ervin's political future is now. But public adulation has brought him a nationwide fan club, "Uncle Sam" T-shirts bearing his jowly countenance, and a paperback entitled "The Wisdom of Sam Ervin" (subtitled "Quotations from Chairman Sam"). He's even on the cover of Rolling Stone, the rock music magazine.

Such recognition provides the silver lining in the Watergate cloud for Ervin, but the green is going to Bill Wise, press secretary to Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), who wrote the 180-page quickie for Ballantine Books. Wise says he got an advance of around \$5,000 and orders in Washington alone are up to 10,000 for the book, which will be out in two weeks.

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WINNERS, From A1

Politically, the big winner may be Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.), the vice chairman and new TV matinee idol at 47. Baker has been a guest on the mass nighttime TV shows and according to his office is in great demand as a speaker around the country, particularly among Republican groups.

Inevitable speculation about him as a 1976 presidential candidate already is well under way, bolstered by a Harris Survey on Aug. 2 showing him running ahead of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) in a presidential race, 45 per cent to 44. Only one other Republican, Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) also bested Kennedy in the Harris Survey.

Part of Baker's reward, aides say, is a stream of the curious driving past his homes, both in Washington and in Huntsville, Tenn. Wherever he parks his car these days, his office says, people tuck notes of congratulation in the windshield.

All other members of the Ervin committee report that their mail has swelled with favorable comment and with speaking invitations. In Washington and in airports around the country, their aides say, they are now readily recognized and greeted.

The committee's majority and minority counsels, Prof. Samuel Dash of Georgetown for the Democrats and Fred Thompson, the Tennessee lawyer, for the Republicans, also have become celebrities. Both have signed with the Harry Walker lecture agency in New York. They are speaking on weekends and will do the bar association, college campus circuit in the late fall, after the Watergate hearings are over. The usual fee, Walker says, is between \$1,500 and \$2,500 a speech.

Lesser staff aides, too, whose faces have become familiar to a nation of Watergate watchers, may have new political and/or legal careers open to them. Rufus Edmisten, a deputy counsel and the man usually sitting at



RUFUS EDMISTEN
... possible candidate

Sen. Ervin's ear, is being mentioned as a possible candidate for attorney general in North Carolina.

Terry Lenzner, the aggressive bespectacled interrogator who is a former Justice Department civil rights lawyer, has been heading the investigation into campaign dirty tricks, which is scheduled for TV airing next month. For Lenzner and others in that investigation, their fortunes could be affected if the committee decides to break into subcommittees on the next two phases, dirty tricks and campaign finances. Such a move, being urged by Sen. Herman E. Talmadge (D-Ga.) and others, doubtless would cause a cutback in TV coverage.

Beyond the members and staff of the Ervin committee, the big Water-

gate winner may well be the Public Broadcasting Service and the National Public Affairs Center for Television (N-Pact), which has been doing the highly popular nighttime reruns of the Watergate hearings.

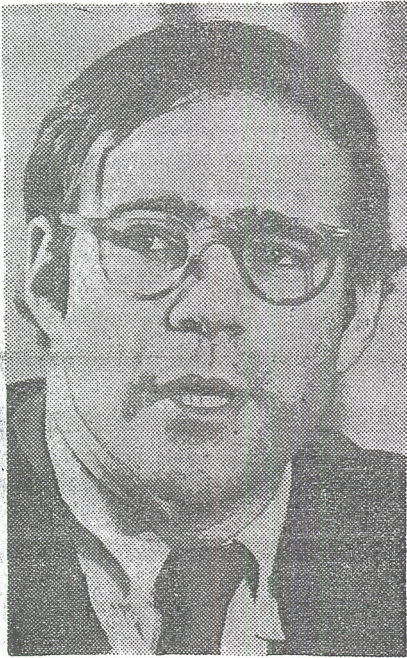
The success of the reruns has taken the heat off public television from the Nixon administration that had threatened to gut it, and particularly N-PACT. Its ratings, according to Jim Karayn, head of N-PACT, have multiplied three or four times in every city, and more than \$1.5 million has been contributed to local stations directly as a result of the Watergate reruns. Approximately \$55,000 has been pledged to WETA, Channel 26 here, Karayn reports.

The New York outlet, Karayn says, has been averaging 1,200 new subscribers a week, and during the first 18 days of the hearings, \$10,000 a night was pledged in Miami alone. Channel 13 in New York, the PBS station, outsourced two of the major commercial networks. Of 75,000 letters to N-PACT here, Karayn says, two-thirds of the correspondents said they had never watched public television before.

Among the showpiece bits of testimony to N-PACT's success, Karayn quotes Dick Cavett saying he had been watching the Watergate reruns instead of his own show at night, and a complaint from author Jacqueline Susann that the reruns had hurt the sale of her latest book.

Karayn says many letters have come in from viewers accusing N-PACT "of destroying their sex life" because of the late-hour playbacks. A neurosurgeon wrote that he was cancelling morning operations for the duration; the producer of "All in the Family" wrote that Sam Ervin would soon withdraw Archie Bunker; a woman in New York sent the local outlet a check for \$6,000, noting: "This is exactly twice as much as I gave the Committee for the Re-election of the President."

The new prosperity has been costly



TERRY LENZEN

... probes dirty tricks

for N-PACT—\$525,000 to produce the first 37 days of hearings, requiring that Karayn borrow from next spring and summer budgeting. Should the Ervin committee decide to split into subcommittees, he says, N-PACT probably would have to resort to abridged coverage.

The lawyers in the Watergate case, too, have shared in the bounty of publicity and money. About \$400,000 is said to have gone to the lawyers of Watergate defendants, not including fees to all those lawyers defending other clients who have been witnesses before the Ervin committee or special Watergate investigator Archibald Cox.

A number of books on Watergate are in the works too, including one by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, the

Washington Post reporters who have already won most journalistic prizes, and about \$10,000 in prize money, for their investigative reporting on Watergate. They have a \$55,000 advance from Simon and Schuster, plus foreign rights and an option from the Book-of-the-Month club. They have done a modest amount of lecturing, too, but are delaying the bulk of it until the Watergate case runs its course.

The news business, generally, has been a Watergate winner. For one thing, the 1973 confirmation of its 1972 disclosures on Watergate is presumed to have been a boon to press credibility. For another, the various post-Watergate proceedings—the Ervin committee hearings, the Justice Department investigations and the thrill-a-minute pace of continued revelations—have kept newsmen in Washington operating on a crisis schedule. The usual summer doldrums in the news business did not materialize this year.

And then there are these strictly commercial offshoots: a Watergate game, a Watergate puzzle, Watergate record albums, Watergate bumperstickers—everything from “Honk If You Think He’s Guilty” to “Impeachment with Honor.” Comics Mark Russell at the Shoreham Hotel and David “I am the President” Frye also have tapped the Watergate lode.

So has Rep. William L. Hungate (D-Mo.), who wrote “Down at the Old Watergate,” to the tune of the old English pub song, “Down at the Old Bull and Bush.” It has been released by Perception Records in New York.

Meanwhile, down at the old Watergate, business is booming at Washington’s most notorious if not most fashionable address. According to Brig. Gen. Delbert Munson, a retired Army officer who is the complex’s property manager, the last of the three cooperative apartment units has just sold out. There are some, but not many, vacancies in the two office buildings, he says—including the whole sixth-floor suite occupied by the Democratic National

Committee on the night of June 17, 1972, when the long trail of Watergate winners and losers began.

In the liquor store in the Watergate shopping mall, the house brands of scotch, bourbon, gin and vodka—with the word Watergate and a picture of the complex on the label—have become collector’s items.

The owner, Rip Packman, tells the story of a sophisticated elderly woman customer who loaded up to take souvenirs to friends in Florida and embarrassedly went through the usual airport search.

“You’ll never guess what I have in here,” she said. “You’ve got Watergate scotch,” the inspector replied. “Everybody does.”

Requests have come from all over the country and Mexico, Packman says, and the house brands outsell all others by at least two to one. The store also has glasses and ashtrays bearing the label.

Even for some of the bona-fide losers, the Watergate cloud has a silver lining, etched with green. E. Howard Hunt, author of 44 books and two more soon to come out, is having a number of them reissued in paperback.

Signet books is reissuing six titles written between 1965 and 1967 under the pseudonym “David St. John,” but this time with Hunt’s own name, identifying him as a “convicted Watergate conspirator.” G. P. Putnam’s Sons is bringing out a 20,000 first printing of “The Berlin Ending,” a new Hunt novel, on Tuesday and Arlington House is to publish “Give Us This Day,” Hunt’s account of his own involvement in the Bay of Pigs affair, in November.

Hunt has been following his literary fortunes from prison in Danbury, Conn. When Signet put out a press release recently erroneously identifying him as “former head of the CIA,” he wrote the publishing house that it should have read “career officer.” According to Signet, he also asked that the E. be dropped from his name.