

Press Clips

EVERYBODY IS SAYING that investigative reporter Sy Hersh has saved the New York Times' reputation on Watergate. Everybody is right. Largely because of Hersh, the Times is now holding its own with the Washington Post, and seems slightly ahead of the delayed digging at Time and Newsweek.

HERSH MAY BE THE FORERUNNER of a new kind of Washington Timesman. The current model, as Aaron Latham writes in New York magazine, is the reporter as ambassador. Hersh, the man who hounded Mylai into print and the national consciousness, is gruff and pushy, and seems to be all over Washington these days. He is deep into pre-Watergate scandals, breaking the stories on the Nixon National Security Council taps, the FBI agent provocateur inside the Weathermen (unaccountably on page 56 of the Times), and the Nixon game plan for burglarizing left-wing organizations. The hot rumor in Washington, for what it's worth, is that Hersh is preparing a piece that will force Nixon's impeachment or resignation.

SHELDON SKOLNICK, a Chicago conspiracy theorist, has been appearing on radio talk shows around the country promoting an elaborate theory about the plane crash at Midway Airport last December which killed the wife of E. Howard Hunt. At least \$10,000 in charred bills was found near Mrs. Hunt's body. Skolnick's theory involves ties to Watergate, missing secret papers, sabotage of the plane, and the possibility of cyanide poisoning of pilot and crew. To my knowledge, only New York magazine, the Amsterdam News, and the Boston Phoenix have printed anything on the story. The Chicago papers, desperate for a local angle on Watergate, have not touched it. The first examination by a major daily is being prepared by the New York Times, and may be out before this column appears. It finds no conspiracy.

MEANWHILE CARL OGLESBY, who wrote the Phoenix piece, is joining in a group letter to Judge Sirica, asking him to enjoin the executor of Mrs. Hunt's estate from administering the estate until questions about the crash have been resolved. The executor of the estate, who wrote a recent Times magazine article sympathetic to Hunt, is William F. Buckley, Jr.

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