

Q. I am fascinated by the relationship of E. Howard Hunt, who bungled the Watergate robbery, and William Buckley, the conservative commentator who is godfather to three of Hunt's four children. What is the basis of their friendship? Also how could our Central Intelligence Agency hire a man of Hunt's character? Are there many others like him in the CIA?
—T.W., Mclean, Va.

A. In 1951 and 1952, when William Buckley Jr. was doing some work for the CIA in Mexico, his superior was E. Howard Hunt, then assigned by the CIA to its station in the American Embassy in Mexico City. Hunt and Buckley soon became fast friends. Buckley is not only godfather of three Hunt children but the executor of Dorothy Wetzel Hunt's estate. Mrs. Hunt, who was involved in the Watergate payoffs, was killed in a United Air Lines plane crash in 1972.

Hunt was hired by the CIA in 1947 because he had been a member of the OSS (the Office of Strategic Services) in World War II. For the best insight into his career and character, read *Compulsive Spy—The Strange Career of E. Howard Hunt*, by Tad Szulc.