

Please return for my Hunt file

NYTimes 12/10/72 interview with E. Howard Hunt, published 12/12 LW 12/29/72

I'd read and filed this piece two weeks ago, when I was given a copy, nothing that there was much strange about it. Today I got another copy and questions about it from JDW so I decided to reread. Especially in the light of what has been printed since and thoughts I've had since is it very strange, beginning journalistically. This will not be a full analysis, which would be much too long. It will be little more than comments on some of the language and quotes.

"...Hunt no longer even faintly [note-not a signed piece] resembles the witty, urbane former spy friends say they remember."

Unless the author knew Hunt before, this is dubious. It also seems to say that the writer spoke to friends, something not contained in the story. Or, he is repeating what he has been told and doesn't say it. However, if there is a change in Hunt, it has to be obvious that his personal troubles could also have caused it, not just the death of his wife.

"- Mr. Hunt has displayed flashes of ~~wit~~ his wry sense of humor and other signs that his spirits were still intact to those reporters who could catch up with him."

I don't know any reporter who interviewed him and wrote a story, don't know of any story quoting him, and do know that he went to great lengths to avoid being seen. When followed by cameras after being spotted leaving Williams' office after a deposition, he did what any spook knows will attract maximum photographer attention, sought to avoid having his picture taken. I think he knows the spook business and from this deduce it was more important for him to avoid having a good picture published than anything else at that time, even if at the risk of attracting extra attention to himself. He was, supposedly, out of the spook business for two years then. ?s: who did he not want to recognize him and why?

This is editorializing. The question that occurs immediately is how did it pass what editor? Again, fabrication, second-hand or by someone who knew him. Like, say, Tad Sculez, who covered Bay of Pigs for Times, or wrote about it later, forget which? This is something like the Post and Wayne Johnson's silence about the code names Eduardo and "Acho, when Johnson's own books shows they are fakes. (Also not reported when I told Woodward.)

How did this reported know that Hunt "invariably wore in public" those "dark glasses and straw hat". He says it. To put it this positively one would have to not be a reporter and would have to be a shadow.

Hunt "talked slowly of the circumstances surrounding the latest and most shattering in his series of personal tragedies." This is not straight news writing, minor. What "latest" in "his series of personal tragedies." Can anyone count past two? All the others are part of getting caught, or one.

"He reminded a visitor" that he can't talk about WG. This is not normal news writing, signed piece, unsigned signed piece or straight news. Unless there was a visitor other than the writer.

What follows is unclear, the source being unknown. But it says that his wife's purse was not found until Saturday ("found Saturday in the wreckage...") Later there is this, direct quotes of Hunt, "We reported it immediately to the United Air Lines representatives!"

This gets interesting, begining with the "We". That says more than one person knew and reported to representatives. But supposedly Carlstead, from quotes of him, had no knowledge. Who is the "we" and why more than one representative? I'd asked LF to check and see if Hunt asked for the loot as soon as he got to Chicago and noted the extreme brevity of his visit as reported, hardly enough time to turn around. And not needed for the reported purpose, identification, reportedly made by Carlstead. I wonder how many men would leave an unfound \$10,000 + in the wreckage of a plane with all sorts of strangers searching for it and the possibility it had been thrown clear, or the bills had burned in part and would have to be redeemed, etc?

Hunt is quoted as saying, "I don't know how it would be possible to convince anybody" that there was no connection with the WG \$100 bills. One way would be to give its source. That seems to be the one impossibility! Uncritical reporter, huh?

Interesting sidelight, quoting "a source who said he was familiar with the Nixon campaign's so-called (straight reporting after all that had been published?) 'secret fund' said yesterday that it was made up largely of bills of this denomination." Usual?

The "business investment" purpose of the wife carrying the unexpected \$10,000 on a weekend trip gets less credible with every explanation.

Carlstead, quoted from Chicago, said as an account that this is not unusual. "Here, and he turns up at Hunt's home. From the above not reported..."

relative of Hunt's, to say that it is unusual for just about everyone, only not for Hunt.

"If you were going to take \$10,000 to Chicago you wouldn't take it in cash, could you?" he said. I wouldn't either, but everyone does things differently." Amen!

His wife was Mrs. Wife's cousin, how far removed I haven't seen or don't remember.

Comes the tears. Hunt is unemployed for six months. "I have to look for work after the resolution of this so-called Watergate case," he said, I have to find a way of providing for my family and my children" (sic).

Not from the top: He doesn't provide for anyone with the investing of \$10,000. At usurious rates this could yield \$2000 a year, and that would be windfall. "Inus taxes.

Inadvertently he says he is well fixed. He is not even looking for work until the dim, distant future, "I have to look for work after the resolution..." "rial, decision, appeal, appeal of appeal, etc. Years. If the \$10,000 was his the only thing that makes sense is that he is really loaded or is being well cared for while "unemployed". Otherwise, as I've indicated earlier, even without legal expenses, he'd hold onto every \$ for day-to-day expenses, living necessities, keeping that expensive home, oldest child in Smith, etc.

Interesting formulation of how Hunt heard of the accident: "after receiving news of the plane crash". This is not exactly the same as "after hearing of the plane crash on the radio." It tend to confirm what I'd suggested earlier, that Carlstead phoned him immediately and he knew, if not by prearrangement (C meeting the plane), then by the call that Carlstead was there and with the pretended closeness he'd not be needed for identification of the body.

"...Mr. Carlstead, who was also present" at Hunt's home for the interview, nice, thoughtful thing to do. Not Mr. and Mrs. C. Under such circumstances, a woman, normally, is more useful with the oldest of the numerous children only 20 and soon to return to college. Or to drop out. Or they have a very long Xmas vacation. Dhe was home the night of the accident or possibly the next day, and was quoted. It is possible she was weekendng. Saturday not abnormal, except that the quotes indicate she had knowledge of the purposes of the trip and she was interviewed in his absence.

This has still a other version of what happened to the money. Not that IRS wanted to see if Hunt wa in arrears: "Mr. Carlstead said he had been informed that the money "will apparently have to go through the illinois courts' before being awarded to the executor of Mrs. Hunt's estate."

I think this says it was not Hunt's money or that he had at that late date not claimed it as his, which is not consistent with the purposes of his making an investment. I think it may well suggest a will.

And why was C, not Hunt, "informed"?

With Sturgis's initials on it yet!

In all of this the "reporter", who sounds more and more like Hunt's p.r. agency associates, seemed to forget Hunt was a prolific writer who could make a reasonable living that way in even the modest representation of the lead, not repeated in body, "his modest reputation as a writer and novelist".

Or, no wonder it is "Special to The New York Times". It is very special!

It doesn't stack, not any part of it.

Maybe Carlstead was there for the funeral and his wife returned to Chicago ahead of him because of their kids?

But would an experienced reporter refer to himself as "a visitor"? (Has the Times other than experienced reporters and if it did, would they be assigned to a feature like this?)

Other questions this raises I have raised earlier.