

Ex-CIA Spy Hunt Feels Betrayed

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By John Saar

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Spies don't tell, and when former CIA agent E. Howard Hunt faced judge and jury last January for his role in the Watergate burglary he kept the code of silence. Behaving as though he were facing a "show trial" in some hostile foreign land, Hunt showed no emotion, pleaded guilty and said little.

Of his CIA career, Hunt said yesterday, "I was an intelligence officer—a spy." Former CIA director Richard Helms, who poured subtle cold water on Hunt's espionage capabilities in previous Watergate testimony, has characterized him as "a bit of a romantic."

Last Friday William Buckley, the conservative columnist who is a longtime friend and also a former CIA operative, asked Hunt where he was being lodged during his testimony before the Senate Watergate committee. "He said, 'I'm in a Federal Bureau of Prisons "safe house,"'" Buckley relates.

Buckley, who is godfather to three of Hunt's children, defined the safe house term as "a place where you can operate and the enemy doesn't know about—in this case the press is unaware of."

Yet, if the terminology of espionage still litters Hunt's speech, the bond of trust between government and agent,

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it was apparent yesterday, no longer exists.

Professing his disillusionment by the very dry and lifeless tone of his voice, Hunt made it plain he felt himself a man betrayed. "Beyond all this," he said after relating a litany of Watergate-related misfortunes, "I am crushed by the failure of my government to protect me and my family as in the past it has always done for its clandestine agents."

His friends portray Hunt as a man of considerable intelligence but narrow focus. Fiercely anti-Communist in fact and fiction—during his 21 years with the CIA he authored more than 40 cold-war novels—Hunt carried his crusading zeal into re-

tirement and onto a new job at the White House, they say.

Buckley considers it "preposterous" that Hunt, who was paid \$100 a day as a consultant to the White House, might have participated in the Watergate break-in for commercial motives. "I think that he did it because he was convinced it was an extension of what he had been trained to do throughout his life outside the country."

After his retirement from the CIA in 1970, Hunt looked for a civilian job with equivalent prestige and excitement. He told friends he had found such a position when his old friend Charles Colson, then serving as a senior aide to President Nixon, hired him in 1971 as a White House investigator.

The consequences of what another friend calls his "fanatical patriotism," and its exploitation by others, have been catastrophic for the 54-year-old Hunt.

The son of a judge, a man noted for self-pride, he is disgraced by imprisonment as a common felon. His wife Dorothy is dead—killed last December in a plane crash while carrying \$10,000 in \$100 bills in her purse. Hunt has said his wife was paymaster for the Watergate cover-up and friends say he blames himself for her death.

The four Cuban-Americans who obeyed "Eduardo" as surely at Watergate as they had at the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba 10 years previously were imprisoned and ruined.

Then, heaping insult on injury as Hunt saw it, he was accused of blackmail by the President of the United States for seeking the legal and living expenses routinely paid to captured agents. "Hunt knows the CIA are trained not to retrieve their wounded," says Buckley, but he gradually realized that beyond the government's formal denial of responsibility for him there was "a genuine duplicity."

The sledgehammer blow that finally demolished Hunt's resistance, according to his friends, was Chief U.

S. District Judge John Sirica's imposition of a provisional 35-year prison term. Hunt feared he could not physically survive many years of imprisonment and could not face the separation from his four motherless children. Even before his appearance before the Senate select Watergate committee yesterday, Hunt has been taken manacled and chained from his cell in the Federal prison at Danbury, Conn., to testify on more than 25 occasions.

In his anxiety to appease Judge Sirica, Hunt volunteered yesterday to answer questions that impinged on the confidential privilege of attorney-client communications with William O. Bittman, his attorney during the

trial. His current lawyer, Sidney S. Sachs, has refused all comment "because I just don't want to say anything that might hit the judge the wrong way."

Literary agent Donald MacCampbell, who is responsible for the reissue of 17 Hunt novels and two new books by the most famous criminal-author since Clifford Irving, believes Hunt is telling all he knows. "He's put loyalty aside and how he's worrying about Howard Hunt. He has four children and all of them are really having problems. They have no mother and they need their father desperately."

On Dec. 10, two days after his wife's death, Hunt put in a call to Buenos Aires and asked the family's one-time governess if she could come up to Washington to look after the children. "He sounded strange, he was so upset he could hardly speak," said the graying, sixtyish governess who refused to give her name when she was interviewed at Hunt's Potomac home. "And when I came, he was so depressed, crying, and saying, 'what have I done to my family?'"

The governess said the \$125,000 house, called Witches Island, on a secluded, tree-shielded site on River Road, has been an empty and cheerless place in recent months. "The children mope around and only I know how much they miss and need him." Nine-year-old children at school were saying very cruel things about him."

Of the other children, she said that Hunt's oldest son, St. John, 19, has dropped out of school and is looking for a job. A daughter, Kevan is at Smith College and her elder sister Lisa is at home.

While her brother's rock-band was playing in a converted dovecote behind the house, Lisa recently told a reporter "we are doing fine," she declined on her father's instruction to say more.

In regular contact with Hunt and the family, Buckley says the children are well. Hunt's financial position is "pressing" even though a \$250,000 flight insurance policy taken out by Mrs. Hunt has been paid. According to Buckley, Hunt is \$90,000 out of pocket on his legal expenses, and with "four children, his small patrimony is being eaten up."

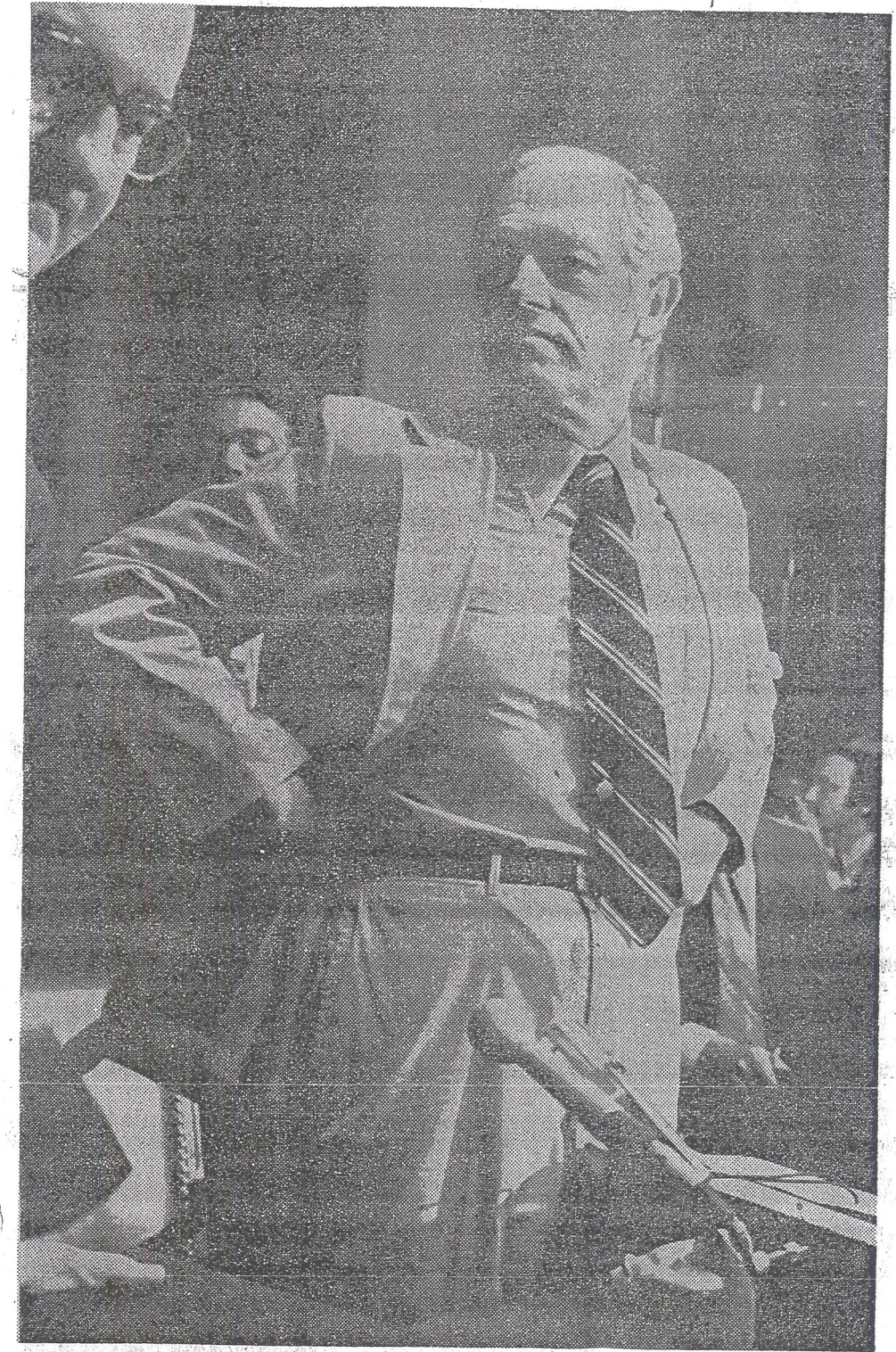
Literary agent MacCampbell says that although Hunt's latest novel "The Berlin Ending," is in its second printing and has sold 30,000 copies, all the income on it and Hunt's other books goes to pay legal expenses of \$1,500 a day.

Some people who live near the Hunt family home say that Hunt carried the remote, unobtrusiveness necessary in his professional life over into his civilian retirement. They describe a man with a habitual expression of frozen politeness that discouraged conversation.

One neighbor who requested not to be named said Hunt was "a haughty man who looked at you as though you weren't there. And he had a fiery temper, his wife was always having to apologize for him."

After graduating from Brown University in 1940, Hunt joined the Navy. An accidental injury that caused him to leave the service was the quirk of fate that set him on the long path to Watergate. He worked as a movie scriptwriter and as a war correspondent for Life magazine before finding his forte in intelligence and joining the fledgling Office of Strategic Services in 1943.

Going undercover for the



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

The Watergate committee away for a vote, E. Howard Hunt takes a break at hearing.

first time, Hunt was provided with Air Force rank to hide his real activities. After the war he gravitated naturally into the Central Intelligence Agency and lived under diplomatic cover for the rest of his career.

There is good evidence

that the atmosphere of secrecy that became an obsession with Hunt even exceeded CIA requirements. Alfred E. Friendly, former managing editor of The Washington Post, hired Hunt to work in Paris at the war's end. Years later, when he met his

one-time correspondent crossing the lobby of the National Press Building in Washington, Hunt blandly denied his identity.

Hunt's penchant for melodrama and intrigue manifested itself during his CIA career, former director

Helms hinted. Questioned on Hunt and fellow Watergate defendant James W. McCord, both of whom retired from the agency in 1970, Helms gave McCord an unblemished testimonial.

But about Hunt Helms conveyed reservations, noting "I think there was a tendency sometimes for him to get a little bit carried away with some of the things he was doing." One episode Helms may have had in mind was Hunt's attempt to prolong a pleasant stint in Uruguay by asking the president of that country to intervene with President Eisenhower for him. Hunt encouraged the unsuccessful lobbying, it's been reported, by promising the Uruguayan president some modern helicopters.

Steeped in the lore and language of "the agency" or "the company," which he hyped up in lurid fiction, Hunt went into the service of the White House with a grandiloquent afterglow. Planning the Ellsberg burglary, Hunt told Deputy CIA director Robert Cushman he was on "a highly sensitive mission" to get information on an individual whose ideology we aren't entirely sure of." Requesting CIA aid, and thereby possibly embroiling the agency in illegal domestic intelligence operations, Hunt asked for a wig, a camera hidden in a tobacco pouch and a speech altering device.

The transcript shows Cushman acquiescing as Hunt asks for "flash alias documentation" and "pocket litter" that "your cover people" could supply. Cushman wasn't sure how long it would take, but old hand Hunt knew and said so.

The flaw in Hunt's thinking, which he claims led him to believe that the Watergate burglary was a legitimate act of national security, finally brought people above and below him to disaster. Because he thought it legitimate, he had no reservations about leaning on the loyalty of his Cuban-American comrades in arms. Hunt, who once recommended the assassination of Fidel Castro, is a hero to the Bay of Pigs veterans. When Bernard Barker was questioned on his Watergate motivations, he told the incredulous committee: "E. Howard

Hunt under the code-name of Eduardo represents to the Cuban people their liberation."

The CIA profile requested by the White House special investigations unit, known as "The Plumbers" of which both Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy were members, concluded that Dr. Daniel Ellsberg "seemed to be responding to what he deemed a higher order of patriotism." Ironically, that explanation which Hunt said yesterday "was not comprehensible to any of us at the White House," could also be ascribed to Hunt.

While undertaking questionable intelligence operations, Hunt escalated his requests for CIA help to a level of unreality that prompted Helms and Cushman to cut him off completely. Hunt wanted 'sterile' phone numbers, an office in New York, the use of 'safe' houses, the return from her Paris posting of a CIA secretary.

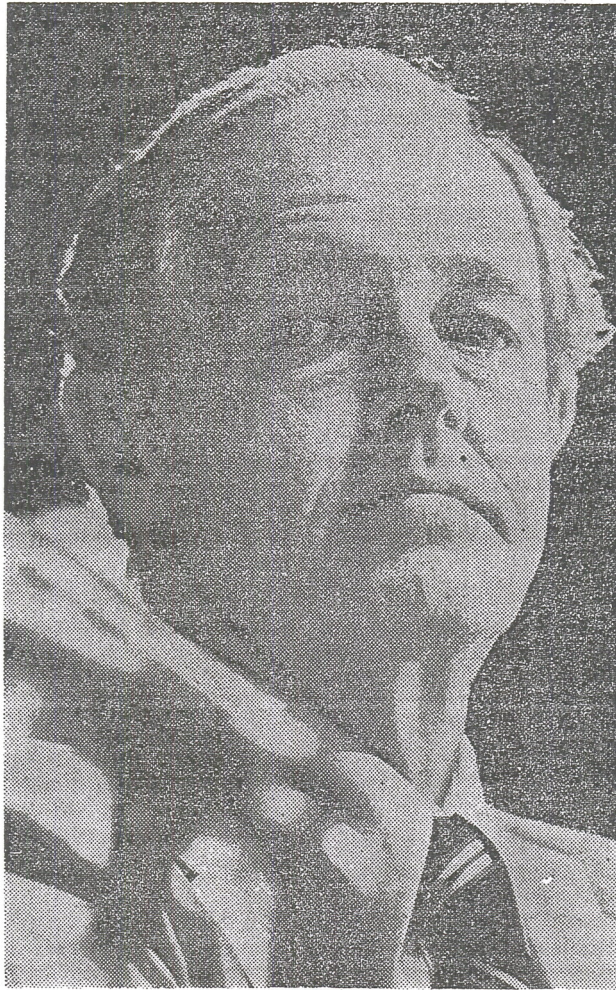
When in the shaky days after the arrest in the Watergate of five of his co-conspirators, Hunt met Liddy, he asked in CIA parlance who the "action officer" was?

Hunt later would reject the description "illegal" for the burglary, calling it "clandestine" and in amplification, "an entry operation conducted under the auspices of competent authority." Helms made no at-

tempt to conceal his disdain for the Watergate operation, which he described as "amateurish in the extreme."

But it was Hunt, the sophisticated intelligence professional, whose trail reporters and investigators were able to follow away from the Watergate as surely as footprints in the snow. His name, along with that of the White House was listed in diaries carried by two of the Cuban-Americans. Files from his safe in the Executive Office Building were handed to L. Patrick Gray, who eventually destroyed them. Gray resigned his post as acting director of the FBI the day after news of the destruction was published. Finally, it was Hunt's insistence on financial support for himself and fellow Watergate defendants that prompted John W. Dean III to inform President Nixon of the cover-up, the former White House counsel has testified.

An enigmatic remark made by Hunt to newsmen some weeks ago conveyed a remarkable image of his own innocence. He referred to Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," in which an innocent bystander is accidentally slain because he shares the same name as one of the assassins. "I'm not Cinna the Conspirator," said Hunt on his way back to jail, "I'm Cinna the Poet."



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Hunt: neighbors viewed him as remote.