

Hunt's Themes: Politics, Science

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"As for Washington," wrote Howard Hunt, "it has, per capita, more rape, more crimes of violence, more perversion, more politicians, more liquor, more good food, more bad food, more tax collections, more hotels and apartments, and more gold toothpicks than any other city in the world."

"A fine place, if you have enterprise, durability, money and powerful friends."

The 53-year-old White House consultant and author of some 42 detective, sex and science fiction novels and short stories, is probably drawing a deeper meaning from that latter statement he made 15 years ago in the wake of questions that have arisen since it was disclosed that his name, with the notation "W. House," was found in the address books of two persons arrested in connection with the early Saturday morning break-in at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee.

Hunt, who lives at 11120 River Road in Potomac, has

dropped out of sight since that disclosure.

Neighbors said Hunt did not associate with them and that they knew little about him or his activities. The telephone at his home, dubbed "Witches Island," was busy all through the night and knocks on the door went unanswered.

His employer, Robert F. Bennett, executive vice president of the Robert R. Mullen & Co. public relations firm, described Hunt as a "very conservative Republican," and added that "I would assume he would have political friends of that persuasion."

A prolific writer, Hunt is described by "Who's Who" as a contributor to foreign affairs and political journals who also writes books under his own name and the pseudonyms of Robert Dietrich, John Baxter and Gordon Davis.

Names Similar

His books run the gamut from tawdry paperback novels, which feature such things as women begging to be whipped as punishment for being sexually promiscuous, to short science fiction stories

and political novels, some of which are centered in Washington.

Curiously, names similar to those given police by the five suspects arrested in the Saturday morning break-in also appear in his early works.

The hero of "Bimini Run," published in 1949 under Hunt's name, is Hank Sturgis. A suspect arrested in the DNC break-in is a man born as Frank A. Fiorini, 37, who has changed his name to Frank Sturgis.

A central figure in "Maelstrom," published in 1948, also under Hunt's own name, is Henry Metz, who uses the alias Martin to escape to Mexico from a Senate committee investigating his criminal activities.

When James McCord Jr. of Rockville was arrested at the DNC headquarters, District police said he gave them the alias Edward Martin.

In Hunt's novel, "Stranger in Town," published in 1947, the hero's mistress is a Matilda Valdes, who reminds the central figure of a girl he used to know named Jeanne. Eugenio Martinez used the alias Jeanne Valdes when he was arrested at the Watergate, Saturday, District police said.

Shows Conservatism

In his political novels, Hunt shows some measure of the political conservatism which his employer said he upholds. In "A Gift for Gomala," published under the pseudonym John Baxter in 1962, a Washington Post editorial urging more aid for the fictional African government of Gomala is the theme of the story.

"A damned unholy influence, if you ask me," a protagonist in the story says of the newspaper. "And a damn shame a paper like that has an absolute monopoly in Washing-

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ton. Bunch of wild-eyed do-gooders; Wright. They're back of half the socialist giveaway campaigns in the country. Fine stuff for the administration to read every morning and interpret as the voice of the American people!"

The same novel also takes a swipe at the Washington press corps, describing them as drinking too much during one State Department press conference at which liquor was provided free.

Other Novels Listed

Most of Hunt's novels center on Washington or Latin American countries. In "I Came To Kill," written under the Baxter pseudonym in 1954, Hunt writes a novel about the assassination of the fictional President Castro of Panama and the hired killer's love affairs.

Some of Hunt's other novels are "Unfaithful," 1955; "The Cheat," 1954; "Foreign

Affair," 1954, and "The Violent Ones," 1950. During this period, according to Who's Who, Hunt was assigned as an attache to American embassies in Paris, Vienna and Mexico City.

He was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserves from 1940 to 1942 and with the U.S. Air Force from 1942 to 1946, during which time he also wrote for Life magazine and was an editor of the March of Time.

During World War II, Hunt published two war-oriented novels: "East of Farewell" in 1942 and "Limit of Darkness," in 1944, both of which depict the actions of men in combat.

In recent years, Hunt has turned to science fiction short stories. In 1970, writing under the pseudonym of John Baxter, he published "Science Fiction in the Cinema," which is a compendium and critique of the history of science fiction movies.