



The Spy Who Came In From the Cold

William Hogan

"I WAS an intelligence officer—a spy — for the government of the United States." E. Howard Hunt told the Senate Select Committee. A thin wispy man of medium height, he had dwelled for 21 years in the murky world of espionage as a CIA man.

When the CIA no longer wanted him, he offered his skills in the fields of domestic espionage and sabotage. John D. Ehrlichman hired him and Hunt went to work as a "plumber" in the White House basement.

For 18 years Tad Szulc (a Czech name, pronounced Shulz) worked for the New York Times as a political, diplomatic and foreign correspondent. He brushed against the U.S. intelligency community from time to time. Occasionally he was aware of the CIA man Hunt, but met Hunt only once, just before the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961.

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LAST JUNE, while working on the Watergate story, Szulc recalled the name "Eduardo," Hunt's Bay of Pigs cover name. Through a series of odd circumstances, Szulc initiated the phone call that panicked Hunt into believing his cover as "mastermind" of the Watergate breakin had been blown.

In "Compulsive Spy: The Strange Career of E. Howard Hunt," which Viking

will publish this month (\$5.95) Szulc presents a profile of the man and his times and seeks to analyze the climate which permitted the Watergate breakin, that of Dr. Fielding's office in California and the quasi - fantasy world Hunt operated in. It is an absorbing spinoff from the total Watergate story which will be narrated, piecemeal, and analyzed for years, perhaps ad nauseam.

Szulc sees Hunt as a "tragic, tortured and frustrated" figure, but a fascinating one in the context of both the political 1970s and the Cold War which shaped both Hunt's life and ultimate fate — both yet unresolved. For Hunt, Szulc suggests, is part of American history still in the making.

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HUNT pleaded guilty and kept silent at his own trial, getting all he could get in cash and promises of clemency from the White House. He felt crushed, put - upon and abandoned when it became apparent the CIA would not take care of its own; he turned against his old agency with fury.

Szulc concludes in this rather eerie display of psycho-history that Hunt has a tragic place in contemporary history. "Unwittingly, he helped trigger America's greatest political trauma of the century. This makes him important. But Howard Hunt is a man who has lost his way time after time and whose ultimate loyalty was to himself."