

FBI Finds Nixon Aides Sabotaged Democrats

By Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward
Washington Post Staff Writers

FBI agents have established that the Watergate bugging incident stemmed from a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage conducted on behalf of President Nixon's re-election and directed by officials of the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The activities, according to information in FBI and Department of Justice files, were aimed at all the major Democratic presidential contenders and — since 1971 — represented a basic strategy of the Nixon re-election effort.

The Nixon forces, using funds from GOP campaign contributions, attempted to discredit individual Democratic presidential candidates and disrupt their campaigns, according to federal investigators. "Intelligence work" is normal during a campaign and is said to be carried out by both political parties. But the investigators said what they uncovered goes far beyond what is normal, and is unprecedented in its extent and intensity.

They said it included:

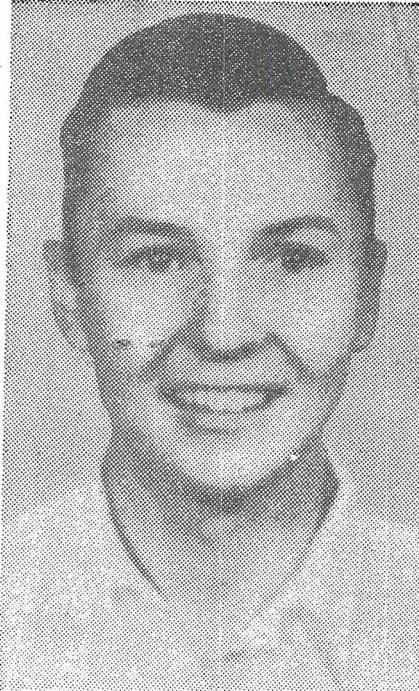
Following members of Democratic candidates' families; forging letters and distributing them under the candidates' letterheads; leaking false and manufactured items to the press; throwing campaign schedules into disarray; seizing confidential campaign files, and investigating the lives of dozens of Democratic campaign workers.

Informed of the general contents of this article, the White House referred all comment to the Committee for the Re-election of the President. A spokesman there said, "The Post story is not only fiction but a collection of absurdities." Asked to discuss the specific points raised in the story, the spokesman, DeVan L. Shumway, refused on grounds that "the entire matter is in the hands of the authorities."

Law enforcement sources said that probably the best example of the sabotage was the fabrication — by a White House aide — of a letter to the editor alleging that Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) condoned a racial slur on Americans of French-Canadian descent as "Canucks."

The letter was published in the Manchester Union Leader Feb. 24, less than two weeks before the New Hampshire primary. It in part triggered Muskie's politically damaging "crying speech" before the newspaper's office.

Washington Post staff writer Mari-



1963 Photo

DONALD H. SEGRETTI
... 'This is all ridiculous'

lyn Berger reported that Ken W. Clawson, deputy director of White House communications, told her in a conversation on Sept. 25 that, "I wrote the letter."

Interviewed again yesterday, Clawson denied that he had claimed authorship of the "Canuck" letter, saying the reporter must have misunderstood him. "I know nothing about it," Clawson said.

William Loeb, publisher of the Manchester paper, said yesterday that although the person who signed the letter — a Paul Morrison of Deerfield Beach, Fla. — has never been located, "I am convinced that it is authentic."

However, Loeb said he is investigating the possibility that the letter is a fabrication because of another letter he received about two weeks ago. The recent letter, Loeb said, maintains that another person was paid \$1,000 to assist with the "Canuck" hoax.

B. J. McQuaid, editor-in-chief of the Union Leader, said earlier this year that Clawson had been "useful" to the paper in connection with the "Canuck" letter. Though McQuaid did not elab-



The Washington Post

KEN W. CLAWSON
... now denies writing letter

orate, he too said that he believed the original letter was authentic.

Clawson, a former Washington Post reporter, said he met McQuaid only briefly during the New Hampshire primary while lunching in the state with editors of the newspaper.

He denied that he provided any assistance with the letter. Clawson said the first time he heard of the "Canuck" letter was when "I saw it on television" following the Muskie speech.

Immediately following his "crying speech," Muskie's standing in the New Hampshire primary polls began to slip and he finished with only 48 per cent of the Democratic primary vote — far short of his expectations.

Three attorneys have told The Washington Post that, as early as mid-1971, they were asked to work as agents provocateurs on behalf of the Nixon campaign. They said they were asked to undermine the primary campaigns of Democratic candidates by a man who has been identified in FBI reports as an operative of the Nixon re-election organization.

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WATERGATE, From A1

All three lawyers, including one who is an assistant attorney general of Tennessee, said they turned down the offers, which purportedly included the promise of "big jobs" in Washington after President Nixon's re-election. They said the overtures were made by Donald Herbert Segretti, 31, a former Treasury Department lawyer who lives in Marina Del Ray, Calif.

One Federal investigative official said that Segretti played the role of "just a small fish in a big pond." According to FBI reports, at least 50 undercover Nixon operatives traveled throughout the country trying to disrupt and spy on Democratic campaigns.

Both at the White House and within the President's re-election committee, the intelligence-sabotage operation was commonly called the "offensive security" program of the Nixon forces, according to investigators.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the whole Watergate investigation, the investigators say, was that numerous specific acts of political sabotage and spying were all traced to this "offensive security," which was conceived and directed in the White House and by President Nixon's re-election committee.

The investigators said that a major purpose of the sub rosa activities was to create so much confusion, suspicion and dissension that the Democrats would be incapable of uniting after choosing a presidential nominee.

The FBI's investigation of the Watergate definitely established that virtually all the acts against the Democrats were financed by a secret,

fluctuating \$350,000-\$700,000 campaign fund that was controlled by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell while he headed the Justice Department. Later, when he served as President Nixon's campaign manager, Mitchell shared control of the fund with others. The money was kept in a safe in the office of the President's chief fundraiser, former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans.

According to sources close to the Watergate investigation, much of the FBI's information is expected to be revealed at the trial of the seven men indicted on charges of conspiring to eavesdrop on Democratic headquarters at the Watergate.

"There is some very powerful information," said one federal official, "especially if it becomes known before Nov. 7."

A glimpse of the Nixon campaign's spying and disruptions are to be found in the activities of Segretti. According to investigators, Segretti's work was financed, through middlemen, by the \$350,000-\$700,000 fund.

Asked by The Washington Post to discuss Segretti, three FBI and Justice Department officials involved in the Watergate probe refused. At the mention of Segretti's name, each said—in the words of one—"That's part of the Watergate investigation." One of the officials, however, became angry at the mention of Segretti's name and characterized his activities as "indescribable."

Segretti, visited in his West Coast apartment last week by Washington Post special correspondent Robert Meyers, repeatedly answered questions by saying "I don't know," "I don't have to answer that,"

and "No comment." After 15 minutes, he said: "This is material for a good novel, it's ridiculous," and chased the reporter outside when he attempted to take a picture.

According to the three attorneys interviewed by The Post, Segretti attempted to hire them in 1971 as undercover agents working in behalf of President Nixon's re-election. All three said they first met Segretti in 1968, when they served together in Vietnam as captains in the Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

One of the lawyers, Alex B. Shipley, a Democrat who is now assistant attorney general of Tennessee, said Segretti told him, "Money would be no problem, but the people we would be working for wanted results for the cash that would be spent."

Shipley, 30, added: "He (Segretti) also told me that we would be taken care of after Nixon's re-election, that I would get a good job in the government."

According to Shipley, Segretti said that the undercover work would require false identification papers under an assumed name; that Shipley recruit five more persons, preferably lawyers, for the job; that they would attempt to disrupt the schedules of Democratic candidates and obtain information from their campaign organizations; that Shipley would not reveal to Segretti the names of the men he would hire; and that Segretti could never reveal to Shipley specifically who was supplying the money for the operation.

Shipley recalled in a telephone interview: "I said, 'How in hell are we going to be taken care of if no one knows what we're doing?' and Segretti said: 'Nixon knows that

something is being done. It's a typical deal,' Segretti said; 'Don't-tell-me-anything-and-I-won't-know.'"

Segretti's first approach, said Shipley, came on June 27, 1971. "He called me before then and told me he would be in Washington and he came to a dinner party at my apartment at South Four Towers (4600 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington) the night before," said Shipley. "Nothing was said about it then. The next morning I met him for breakfast and drove him to the airport—Dulles."

According to Shipley, he picked Segretti up that morning, a Sunday, at the Georgetown Inn, where—hotel records show—a Donald H. Segretti stayed in room 402 on June 25 and June 26, 1971 (total bill \$54.75, including \$2.25 in telephone calls). In addition, travel records obtained by The Washington Post show that Segretti bought a Washington-San Francisco-Monterey (Calif.) airline ticket on June 27 (departure Dulles).

On the way to Dulles, said Shipley, Segretti "first mentioned the deal. He asked would I be interested because I was getting out of the Army. We were both getting out shortly . . . and didn't have anything lined up. He mentioned on the way to Dulles, that we would do a little political espionage."

Shipley continued: "I said, 'What are you talking about?' He (Segretti) said: 'For instance, we'll go to a Kennedy rally and find an ardent Kennedy worker. Then you say that you're a Kennedy man too but you're working behind the scenes; you get them to help you. You send them to work for Muskie, stuffing envelopes or whatever, and you

get them to pass you the information. They'll think that they are helping Kennedy against Muskie. But actually you're using the information for something else."

"It was very strange," Shipley recalled. "Three quarters of the way to the airport I said, 'Well, who will we be working for?' He said 'Nixon' and I was really taken aback; because all the actions he had talked about would have taken place in the Democratic primaries. He (Segretti) said the main purpose was that the Democrats have an ability to get back together after a knockdown, drag-out campaign. What we want to do is wreak enough havoc so they can't."

Shipley said he told Segretti, "Well, it sounds interesting; let me think about it."

In addition to Shipley, Roger Lee Nixt of Dennison, Iowa, and Kenneth Griffiths of Atlanta, Ga., said they turned down similar offers from Segretti, with whom they served in Vietnam. Both declined to discuss the offers in detail, but they acknowledged that Segretti had told them they would be engaged in sub rosa activities—similar to those described by Shipley—to aid President Nixon's re-election.

Still another lawyer who served with Segretti in Vietnam, Peter Dixon of San Francisco, also said Segretti made him an offer. However, Dixon said he told Segretti "No thanks" before any details of the job were revealed. "I said, 'Gee, Don, I'm not interested in political matters, and I'm not a Republican anyway,'" said Dixon.

The most detailed account of Segretti's activities was given by Shipley, who said he wrote a memorandum to himself about the episode "because it all seemed so strange."

At one point during the four-month period when Segretti was trying to recruit him, said Shipley, he approached a friend who worked for Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) and was advised to try and "string him (Segretti) out to see what he's up to." Although "I don't like these type of shenanigans," Shipley said, he never subsequently contacted anyone else about the matter and said he has not been questioned by the FBI about Segretti.

During a meeting on July

25, said Shipley, Segretti "didn't go into much detail because it was mostly 'Are you with me or not?'" When he asked Segretti exactly what would be expected of him in participating in clandestine activities, Shipley said he was told:

"'Enlist people, be imaginative' One thing he stressed was asking people who were fairly free to travel and (that) he was asking lawyers because he didn't want to do anything illegal. It wasn't represented as a strictly strongarm operation. He stressed what fun we could have. As an example, he gave this situation:

"'When a rally is scheduled at 7 p.m. at a local coliseum by a particular candidate, you call up and represent to the manager that you're the field manager for this candidate and you have some information that some rowdies, some hippies or what-have-you are going to cause trouble. So you ask him to move the rally up to 9 o'clock—thereby insuring that the place would be padlocked when the candidate showed up at 7.'"

Shipley said he was asked by Segretti to fly to Atlanta to enlist their Army colleague, Kenneth Griffiths, in the project, but that he never made the trip. However, when visiting Griffiths last Christmas, said Shipley, "Griffiths mentioned to me that Segretti had been in contact with him and that Griffiths had expressed absolutely no interest at all."

The last time he heard from Segretti, said Shipley, was on Oct. 23, 1971, when "he called from California and asked me to check into Muskie's operation in Tennessee . . . I just never did anything about it."

"At one time during these conjectural discussions," Shipley continued, "Segretti said it might be good to get a false ID to travel under, that it would be harder for anyone to catch up with us. He mentioned he might use the pseudonym Bill Mooney for himself. . . ."

"Segretti said he wanted to cover the country," Shipley continued, "that he would be more or less the head coordinator for the country. But some of the things he proposed to do didn't seem that damaging, like getting a post office box in the name of the Massachusetts Safe Driving Committee and awarding a

medal to Teddy Kennedy—with announcements sent to the press."

"The one important thing that struck me was that he seemed to be well-financed," Shipley said. "He was always flying across the country. When he came to Washington in June he said he had had an appointment at the Treasury Department and that the Treasury Department was picking up the tab on this—his plane and hotel bill. He said 'don't ask me any names.'"

(According to travel records, Segretti criss-crossed the country at least 10 times during the second half of 1971. Stops included Miami, Houston, Manchester, N.H., Knoxville, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Portland, Ore, Albuquerque, Tucson, San Francisco, Monterrey and several other California cities.)

According to Shipley, Segretti was an unlikely choice for any undercover political work. "I didn't think he could do it because he's not that kind of guy," said Shipley. "He doesn't have the right personality. He's a small guy with a big smile on his face all the time, kind of naive almost. I always assumed he was fairly liberal, but I don't think we ever had a political discussion."

Segretti told him one other major element about his covert work, said Shipley: "He intended to go into a law firm near Los Angeles by the name of Young and Segretti—he said it was a cover, that he would be doing only political work."

According to the California Bar Association, Segretti's law office at 14013 West Captain's Row, Marina Del Rey, Calif.

There, in an apartment surrounded by comfortable furniture, piles of photograph records, tomato plants, a stereo receiver, a tap deck and a 10-speed bike, Segretti was found last week by Post special correspondent Myers.

Questioned whether he knew Alex Shipley, Roger Lee Nixt, Kenneth Griffiths or Peter Dixon, Segretti asked, "Why?" Informed that they had said Segretti attempted to recruit them for undercover political work, he replied: "I don't believe it." Then he declined to answer a series of questions except to say either

"I don't know," "No comment," or some similar response.

At one point, Segretti said "This is all ridiculous and I don't know anything about this."

At another point he said "The Treasury Department never paid my way to Washington or anywhere else."

Biographical details about Segretti, who stands about 6 feet 8 and weighs about 150 pounds, are minimal.

From Army colleagues and classmates at the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California in Berkeley, it is known that he was raised on the West Coast.

After receiving his law degree, he served as a Treasury Department attorney in Washington for less than a year, according to friends, and then entered the Army as an officer in the Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

A Treasury Department spokesman confirmed that Segretti, in 1966 and 1967, worked as an attorney in the office of the Comptroller of the Currency here.

About a year of Segretti's Army service, friends said, was spent in Vietnam, with Americal Division headquarters in Chulai and U.S. Army Vietnam headquarters at Longbinh.

Segretti returned to the States for the latter part of his military service and was stationed at Ft. Ord until his discharge sometime in the second half of 1971, according to friends.