

The GOP and Mr. Anderson

*longer run
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Jack Anderson

MEN IN POWER don't relish having their cozy relationships exposed, and their sources of money bared, and their errors and embarrassments publicized.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Nixon Administration doesn't like this column. So the President's dirty tricks department tried to play a few tricks on us.

The dirty tricks operation, otherwise known as the "Offensive Security Program of the Nixon Forces," was established chiefly to bewitch and befoul Democratic presidential candidates. It was funded out of a secret, fluctuating Republican slush fund.

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THE Washington Post has charged that the dirty tricks included forging phony letters to embarrass the Democrats, leaking false information to the press and tailing family members of Democratic presidential candidates.

The Watergate incident — breaking into Democratic Party headquarters — was part of this sordid operation.

In our case, the dirty tricks were pulled by political operatives and government gumshoes alike. Their objective, apparently, was two-fold: (1) to discredit the column by undermining our credibility; and (2) to shut off our sources.

A host of investigators participated in the project. Government agents and even the President's campaign security chief, James W. McCord Jr., joined in the inves-

tigation. In an "interim report" to the White House, he accused me of "close association with the operating arm of the Democratic Party." Ironically, a Democratic Party spokesman later accused me of close association with McCord's operation after we published an embarrassing memo from party files.

Sources inside the White House, meanwhile, warned us of attempts to discredit the column. Not long afterward, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs called a press conference. We were tipped off that the bureau would challenge our story about Thailand's great opium hoax.

The Thai authorities with considerable whoop-de-doo staged a million-dollar opium burning to dramatize how they were cooperating with the U.S. crackdown on drugs. We reported, however, that they really burned cheap fodder mixed with opium.

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NIXON AIDES went to elaborate lengths to knock the story down. But later an administration spokesman sheepishly admitted that Uncle Sam had paid a cool \$1 million for the ashes.

Footnote: White House sources have also warned us that the dirty tricks crowd would attempt to plant false items with us and to bribe someone on our staff. A spokesman vigorously denied that the White House is trying to embarrass us. He called the whole dirty tricks story "fiction."