

THE WATERGATE CAPERS



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EDITORIALS

POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

We urge The Mirror readers to vote a straight Democratic ticket.

We recommend the voter to retire Richard Nixon because his talent for dishonesty and arm-twisting (especially in demanding that the American people "trust" his peacemaking efforts only AFTER he is ensconced in office for another term) are characteristics which do not belong in a democracy.

And we fear that if Nixon is re-elected, "What we see is what we'll get; and we ain't seen nothing yet."

—M J

WHEN WE WERE AT San Angelo recently, the community was buzzing over the headline story in the Houston Chronicle, a Republican paper supporting Nixon, of October 10.

When we returned to Tulia we scanned the Amarillo and Lubbock papers in vain to find the story that made the page one banner in the Houston paper.

A watered down, abbreviated version appeared on page 64, or some such page, but it said nothing.

The headline story in the Houston Chronicle began: "WASHINGTON — 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 Reelection 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 reelection effort.

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, made a racial slur on Americans of French-American descent by referring to them as "Canucks."

"The letter was published in the Manchester (N. H.) Union Leader Feb. 24, less than two weeks before the New Hampshire primary.

"Washington Post staff writer Marilyn Berger reported that Ken W. Clawson, deputy director of White House communications, told her in a conversation on Sept. 25, 'I wrote the letter.' "

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the publication of this scurrilous letter 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.

The impact of the letter in New Hampshire was comparable to a candidate's slur of all Southern Baptist in Texas!

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE story continues: "During their Watergate investigation, federal agents established that hundreds of thousands of dollars in Nixon campaign contributions had been set aside to pay for an extensive undercover campaign aimed at discrediting individual Democratic presidential candidates and disrupting their campaigns.

" 'Intelligence work' is normal during a campaign and is said to be carried out by both political

parties. But federal investigators said what they uncovered being done by the Nixon forces is unprecedented in scope 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.

"In addition, investigators said the activities included planting agents-provocateurs in the ranks of organizations expected to demonstrate at the Republican and Democratic conventions, and routinely investigating potential donors to the Nixon campaign before their contributions were solicited.

"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 reelection organization.

ALL THREE LAWYERS, including one who is an assistant attorney general of the State of Tennessee, said they turned down the offers, which they said included the promise of 'big jobs' in Washington after President Nixon's reelection. They said the overtures were made by Donald Herbert Segretti, 31, a former Treasury Department lawyer who lives in Marina Del Rey, Calif.

"Segretti denied making the offers but refused to answer a reporter's questions.

"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 reelection 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 reelection committee.

"The investigators said that a major purpose of the subrosa 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 Watergate definitely established that virtually all the acts against the Democrats were financed by a secret, fluctuating \$350,000 to \$700,000 campaign fund that was controlled by former Atty. Gen. John W. 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 fund-raiser, former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans."

ONE FEDERAL OFFICIAL said, "There is some powerful information, especially if it becomes known before Nov. 7."

The Chronicle story continues: "Asked to discuss Segretti, three FBI and Justice Department officials involved in the Watergate probe refused. One of the officials, however, became angry at the mention of Segretti's name and characterized his activities as 'indescribable.'

"According to the three attorneys, Segretti attempted to hire them in 1971 as undercover agents working in behalf of President Nixon's reelection. 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, now assistant Attorney General of the State of Tennessee said Segretti told him 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: 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.'

"In addition to Shipley, Roger Lee Nix 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 subrosa activities to aid President Nixon's reelection.

"Still another lawyer who served with Segretti in Vietnam, Peter Dixon of San Francisco, also said Segretti made him an offer."

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE, a conservative paper which certainly has not been anti-Nixon, headlined the story, "FBI Uncovers Sabotage, Spying On Nixon's Behalf."

Facts are, the so-called "New Nixon" is doing nothing he didn't do a generation ago when as the "Old Nixon" he was running against Helen Gahagan Douglas for Congress. It's a little more newsworthy when the person is President of the United States and not just a candidate for Congress.

The obvious question is, "How will the public react to this revelation by the FBI? Can he be re-elected?"

The answer is... in Nixon's own words. "The people have short memories when it comes to political scandals."

This was Nixon's answer to a private group of supporters when asked about the Watergate scandal. Nixon cited history as proof that voters have short memories.

CAN NIXON BE RE-ELECTED in view of this scandal, the ITT scandal, the secret campaign funds stashed away in Old Mexico banks, and all the rest?

Why, certainly!

Didn't Texans support Allan Shivers after the scandals of his administration?

We simply won't buy the proposition that the moral sensitivity of American voters is such that they won't tolerate corruption such as is being practiced by Nixon and his re-election cronies.

Oh, they perhaps will rank moral corruption in 15th or 20th places, after they have dealt with all the false issues being headlined by Nixon, John Connally, and all the others involved with the reelection of Nixon. But it is NOT a major concern.

A SECOND GROUP who will support Nixon despite his lack of moral qualifications for the office is the John Birch type which originated back in the 1950s.

In the 1950s, these people who draped themselves in Old Glory and the Bible, these "super patriots", argued that in order to deal with the Communists you have to adopt the tools and tactics of the Communists. If the Communists lie, then Americans must lie. If the Communists infiltrate, then Americans must infiltrate. If the Communists wiretap, then Americans must wiretap. If the Communists sabotage, then Americans must sabotage. If the Communists murder or break the law, then Americans must murder or break the law.

In other words, the end justifies the means.

TODAY THESE PEOPLE feel that it is so imperative that the Republicans be maintained in office that they excuse Nixon and his tactics because the urgency of the cause demands it!

Today, they equate the Democrats with the Communists, the Republicans with the Americans.

POOOR OLD MC GOVERN is so honest, so unsophisticated politically, that he almost seems to go out of his way to lose votes. No one has been able to challenge his integrity. He is naive enough to believe in such corny expressions as "the basic honesty of Americans" and "the inclination of Americans to reject the false."

Up against these professional gangsters who are directing the Nixon campaign, he is a babe in the woods!

Nixon has already passed the word that he needs no more campaign contributions, that Republicans should hereafter funnel their contributions to the campaign funds of Republican Senators and Congressmen.

Meanwhile, McGovern begs for \$5 and \$10 contributions from the little people in order to wage a token campaign, refusing to believe that the American people will fall for the Madison Avenue tactics of the GOP.

JOHNN CONNALLY last week sought to point out the "real issues" in the campaign, charging that they weren't Watergate and the like.

Connally was right when he made his observation as to what are NOT the "real issues". But he was wrong when he sought to correct the misunderstanding.

The issue is NOT Watergate, it is MORAL CORRUPTION in the highest echelons of the Republican party, particularly in the White House.

We might well pass off Watergate as the mis

directed deed of an over-zealous party worker. As such, we could excuse such an act.

But Watergate is the outward manifestation of something much deeper, something much more immoral.

BACK IN 1964 IT WAS sometimes suggested that the GOP might never recover from its defeat, that it had suffered such a defeat that it would never survive as an effective political party.

We recalled hearing prominent Democrats deplore the suggestion, insisting that it was more important to maintain the two-party system than to have just one party even though that party be the Democratic Party!

During the recent Democratic money raising telethon to retire the 1968 party debt Colonel Sanders of fried chicken fame, a Republican, contributed heavily to the Democrats, insisting that the two-party system must survive!

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, parties have been as partisan-minded as two football opponents . . . yet . . . whenever the system was attacked, with one voice they united in opposing the onslaught.

Throughout history, we should say, until Nixon and Agnew came along! Agnew, reflecting his John Birch philosophy, suggested more than a year ago when Nixon was trailing in the polls that "it is possible that the 1972 election might have to be called off if conditions get out of hand."

This was the first time since the administration of George Washington that such a suggestion had been made. Once, during the first awkward months of our republic, some official thought it might not be advisable to permit the regular election. Washington, of course, deplored the suggestion just as he would now deplore Agnew!

MORE THAN AT ANY other time in our history, we Americans need to purge the White House of a corrupt gang of self-seeking opportunists. We don't place the masses of Republicans in this category by any means.

George McGovern is a victim of Republican financed Madison Avenue image makers.

As noted last week, this is an election in which the Republicans have created the image of both candidates, Nixon and McGovern. McGovern at his worst is better than Nixon at his best.

One of the Madison Avenue tricks has been to convert McGovern into a dirty word.

The Republicans smear all honorable Democratic candidates not by citing inherent weaknesses but simply by saying "this candidate is supporting McGovern!"

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