

Kennedy Seen Real Target of Break-In

By Jack Anderson

The real target of the Watergate break-in, it now appears from confidential White House documents, was Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Sources close to President Nixon confirm that he regarded Kennedy as his most dangerous political foe. The President also expected former Democratic National Chairman Larry O'Brien to manipulate the party machinery in 1972 to bestow the presidential nomination upon Kennedy.

Up to the eve of the Democratic convention, say our sources, the President believed Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.), would step aside the last minute to make way for Kennedy, with O'Brien pulling the strings behind the scenes.

Mr. Nixon had scarcely settled into the White House in 1969 before he began seeking political ammunition to use against Kennedy and O'Brien. The orders were transmitted through staff chief H.R. Haldeman.

A host of colorful super-snoopers were recruited to investigate Kennedy and O'Brien. Among them were a Runyon-esque ex-New York flatfoot, Anthony Ulasewicz; a fleshy flush-faced ex-New York detective, Jack Caulfield; the bewigged former CIA agent and incurable romantic, E. Howard Hunt; and a young, pedantic security specialist who kept a red scrambler telephone in his White House desk drawer, Tom Charles Huston.

Less than six hours after Kennedy ran off the bridge at Chappaquiddick on July 18, 1969,

Caulfield had a man at the scene searching for evidence that could be used to embarrass Kennedy.

Two years later, Hunt again tried to put together a Chappaquiddick scandal that would destroy Kennedy. But the two gumshoes came up with little that the press hadn't already uncovered.

The White House crowd apparently was obsessed with the idea that Kennedy had a weakness for wild parties and promiscuous women. But repeated investigations by Caulfield and Ulasewicz failed to produce any evidence.

As a typical example, Caulfield kept Kennedy under surveillance during a three-day visit to Honolulu on August 17-19, 1971. A secret surveillance report, which referred to the Senator as EMK, was rushed to the White House.

"EMK made no public appearances during his stay in Honolulu," reported Caulfield. "Inquiry ascertained that he occupied the private estate of one J. Ontani, located at Diamond Head Road, Honolulu..."

"Discreet inquiry determined that Kennedy used the estate solely for sleeping purposes, took only his breakfast meal at that location and quietly visited friends at other locations on the island.

"It is known that he played tennis on August 18 at the estate of one Lloyd Martin identified as a wealthy Honolulu contractor..."

"An extensive survey of hotels, discreet cocktail lounges and other hideaways was conducted with a view toward de-

termining a covert EMK visit. The results were negative..."

"In conclusion, it is believed that EMK activity during his stay in Honolulu was adequately covered. No evidence was developed to indicate that his conduct was improper."

Yet the White House still wasn't satisfied until an investigation had been completed of Kennedy's host two months later. In an October 20, 1971, memo, Caulfield wound up the investigation of Kennedy's three-day Honolulu visit with a report that his friend Ontani was "a multi-millionaire Democrat with extensive real estate and business holdings in Hawaii... Sources advise that Ontani significantly controls local politics in Honolulu to the extent that he is referred to as the 'Mayor Maker.'"

The most embarrassing evidence that the gumshoes obtained against Kennedy was a picture of him in the company, quite innocently, of a female friend in Rome. White House aide Charles Colson promptly peddled the photo to a scandal tabloid, with a huge newstand circulation.

The White House documents show that O'Brien received similar attention from the snooper squad. On August 5, 1970, for example, Haldeman ordered John Dean to investigate O'Brien's connection with an international consulting firm called Public Affairs Analysis.

The gumshoe work was assigned to young Huston who found the firm's activities "not only legal but prudent. O'Brien's relationship with PAA is so minor," added Huston,

"that I would think it unworthy of further investigation."

The following January, Haldeman ordered an exhaustive investigation into O'Brien's relationship with billionaire Howard Hughes. Caulfield reported back in a Jan. 25, 1971, memo that the investigation could bubblegum in Nixon's face.

The Hughes organization's "tentacles touch many extremely sensitive areas of government," cautioned Caulfield, "each of which is fraught with potential for Jack Anderson type exposures."

An attempt to tie O'Brien to a leasing scandal also fell flat after John Dean reported in an April 6, 1972, memo:

"As a result of my investigation and discussions, it appears that it would be extremely difficult to establish the direct tie-in between O'Brien and GSA (the government's leasing agency). Even if this could be done, however, it is the concensus of all with whom I have discussed this that raising the issue might open a Pandora's box that we would later regret opening."

Our White House sources say that Haldeman in April, 1972, ordered an investigation into the relationship between McGovern and Kennedy. The White House still feared that O'Brien might be able to stalemata the Democratic convention, persuade McGovern to withdraw and push Kennedy as the presidential nominee.

It was to find out more about this suspected plot, our sources believe, that the Watergate burglars were ordered to break into O'Brien's offices and bug his telephone.