

Who Would Believe the Stories That Seemed to Be Evolving?

AT THAT POINT IN TIME.
By Fred D. Thompson.
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Reviewed by
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WHEN the Watergate hearings were over and President Nixon was gone from Washington, chief minority counsel Fred D. Thompson still had a story to tell. Thompson and other members of the minority staff got a fascinating look at the CIA a year before the rest of the country.

The look, it turned out, was incomplete. The majority of the committee suspected that the investigation into the CIA was a diversionary tactic to draw attention from Richard Nixon, the main target.

And then who at that point in time — an expression Thompson mercifully uses only once — would believe the stories that seemed to be evolving?

Thompson looked into the CIA's cooperation with Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy when the White House "plumbers" were staging the break-in of the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, Dr. Louis Fielding.

"Witnesses (from the CIA) acknowledged that the

CIA had developed film for Hunt and Liddy, and they agreed 'in retrospect' that these were pictures 'casing' Dr. Fielding's office," Thompson writes.

"Not only was the film developed by CIA technicians, we were told, but the material was also reviewed by CIA supervisory personnel before it was returned to Hunt."

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INDEED, Thompson writes that a deputy chief of one CIA division ac-



knowledged he had ordered one of the photographs enlarged, enabling him to read Dr. Fielding's name on a sign in the parking lot next to his office.

This was only the beginning. Thompson lists other examples of CIA involvement that were slowly drawn out from witnesses. But then the CIA fought back.

"The agency's power to get its story across simply by dropping the right word in the right ear was awesome," he writes.

Soon Senator Howard Baker, the Watergate committee vice chairman who had appointed Thompson, found himself attacked in the press for pursuing the CIA for personal political reasons. The CIA put a security blanket on much of what Thompson had learned.

"Over a year later, on December 22, 1974, Seymour Hersh (of the New York Times) evidently became alarmed over the information he had been discounting," Thompson continues.

"He reported a story that 'informed sources' said that the CIA had 10,000 domestic intelligence files on American citizens. The story seemed hardly startling in view of the wide range of activities that we had documented. . ."

The CIA chapter is only a part of Thompson's important account of his pursuit of the facts in the Watergate case — a detailed study that led him to realize reluctantly that the time had come for the removal of a President of the United States.