

1/23/73

Thanks very much for the ChiTrib "Blackmail is suggested as real in Watergate bugging case" story and the CDNews story, "Estate get \$10,000 found in 'dwat crash" and the first and pages 251 and 571 of Sullivan's Law Directory for 1967-68.

From the top: Judge Bazelon's very proper question about blackmail is not in other stories I have. It gives context to the prosecutor's response, which is designed to make it seem that blackmail was the real intent, not corruption of the political system and hurt to the Democrats, or to divorce the thing more from the GOPs and Nixon. The judge's question, why it wasn't in the indictment, may assume more importance in the future. This is also obvious about a number of things in the court below, done by that judge.

I take it that the release of the money to the estate represents an initial finding that the money was Mrs. Hunt's, not E. Howard's, otherwise why give it to the estate, not him? This, of course, destroys the first of many inconsistent stories about it. There is still another contradiction in this one, that the money had been withheld at the request of the State of Maryland. Earlier versions of this character had the request from the tax people, I believe or inferred IRS. Here there is the first mention I have seen of "bank account records" in her purse.

This story also has the first reference to Hunt as an attorney. That he is is clear in his own Who's Who and other bios, although he says nothing about the practise of law. He is, of the things I recall, without checking, a member of the Lawyer's Club in Wash.

I presume Nash left the office of the U.S. Attorney and is in private practise. The phone book should disclose this. I presume you are telling me that Bittman picked a man he knew he could trust from the past to handle this odd deal in selecting Nash, that Hunt did not make the selection of lawyer. If you are saying something else, I'd like to know it. In and of itself, there is not conclusive evidence that there is something wrong in choosing Nash, although I'd have thought that an established law firm might have been chosen. Nash, of course, might be expected to have ~~had~~ currently closer ties with officials.

I'd forgotten Hanrahan had been and for the period of the directory was U.S. Attorney there. This was after Bittman left. Your reasons for underlining these names is unclear to me: J.J. McDonnell and L.E. Morrisson.

I think it is not unreasonable to interpret these things as an indication that probably Bittman knew it was necessary to keep tight control over Hunt's Chicago affairs and picked a man he knew would do this. It would be even more significant if Hunt selected Nash right off the bat, indicating an earlier connection. I doubt he'd have come up with Nash if he'd done what most men in those circumstances would have, had his relative, Carlstead, use his attorney or select one. In turn, this would suggest that Hunt made no initial move, which I'd regard as a bit exceptional, given the sum involved, deciding to leave it to his attorney, whether or not he then knew Bittman would be. Bittman's prestigious firm has to be one of Washington's more expensive, had CIA connections, and may have been known to Hunt through that.

With more time I might carry this thinking further. I had a long day yesterday, when I picked the mail up on my way to Washington and fell asleep sitting up at night just before hearing announce the VN settlement. Today I must devote myself to the Traverse in the Ray case, which I picked up late yesterday because the copy mailed me never got here. It's to be filed this week and I have to go over it. I do this in early a.m. to send to you when I get into town and save a day because this stuff is potentially significant in a significant area the papers have ignored entirely. This is true of other areas. Those doing any work have a strange machismo. Another example is who Hunt really is. The analysis that lead me to the immediate conclusions that he was the operational chief of the Bay of Pigs, which would have made an entirely different scandal had it been reported immediately, with an account of what he then did and almost did, was simple and obvious. Nothing else was possible. But nobody would touch or follow and all went for a planted phoney. Now it is without doubt. If you are interested, he disclosed it himself on Bill Buckley's Firing Line aired Sunday night. A transcript is available from The Firing Line, Box 3966, Columbia, S.C. for 25¢. Barker was his second-in-command then, as I also saw immediately. Hunt, personally, lied to his invasion forces, promising them air support JFK had never agreed to. He continued the lie on Buckley. There is an interesting disclosure of the political thinking of these zanies that show so extreme that it put Buckley in the farout position of defending Castro.