

World of Howard Hunt In Ruins After Six Months

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 11—Six months ago, E. Howard Hunt Jr. was seemingly on top on the world, proud of his exploits during a long career with the Central Intelligence Agency, of his job as a highly paid White House consultant, of his family and expensive home, of his modest reputation as a writer and novelist.

But on June 19, when his name was first connected with the Watergate bugging, his world began to crumble around him, and now, three days after the death of his wife in a plane crash in Chicago, Howard Hunt no longer even faintly resembles the witty, urbane former spy that friends say they remember.

The few times he has appeared in public since the unaccustomed and unwanted publicity of the Watergate affair—to testify before a grand jury investigating the bugging, to make a deposition on his role in the incident with six other men on charges of conspiring to bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters—Mr. Hunt has displayed flashes of his wry sense of humor and other signs that his spirits were still intact to those reporters who could catch up with him.

Talks of Tragedy

But last night, without the dark glasses and straw hat he invariably wore in public, he appeared red-eyed, shaken and exhausted as he sat in his suburban Maryland home and talked slowly of the circumstances surrounding the latest and most shattering in his series of personal tragedies.

He reminded a visitor that, as a defendant in the Watergate criminal trial scheduled to begin next month, he was prohibited by court order from discussing any aspect of the case directly.

But, he said, the discovery of more than \$10,000 in cash in his wife's purse, found Saturday in the wreckage of a United Air Lines jet near Chicago's Midway Airport, had fueled speculation that the money, mostly in \$100 bills, might have some connection with the Watergate affair.

"It doesn't, of course," Mr. Hunt said, "but I don't know how it would be possible to convince anybody of that."

After a moment he added, "There was no attempt made to conceal it [the money]. We reported it immediately to the United Air Lines representatives."

Last spring, one of Mr. Hunt's co-defendants in the Watergate case, a Miami real estate man named Bernard L. Baker, deposited \$114,000 worth of checks intended as contributions to President Nixon's re-election campaign in a Florida bank account that he controlled.

Reported in Special Fund

Mr. Barker withdrew the money, a substantial part of it in \$100 bills, over the next few weeks and allegedly returned it to officials of the Nixon campaign's finance committee.

There have been reports that at least part of this money went into a special fund allegedly used to finance undercover political operations during the Presidential campaign, but there is no evidence of any specific projects for which it was used.

When arrested by the police inside the Watergate office complex here on June 17, Mr. Barker had with him more than \$5,000 in cash, mostly \$100 bills. A source who said he was

familiar with the Nixon campaign's so-called "secre fund" said yesterday that it was made up largely of bills of this denomination.

Mr. Hunt, dressed in a gray plaid jacket, a white shirt open at the collar and holding an unlit pipe as he talked, explained that the money his wife carried was intended to be used for a "business investment" that he said was "confidential."

Unemployed 6 Months

"I've been unemployed for six months now," he said, reaching to grasp the hand of his 20-year-old daughter, Kevan, a sophomore home from Smith College.

Shortly after his name became linked with the Watergate bugging, Mr. Hunt lost both his desk in the Executive Office Building and his other job as a writer with a Washington public relations concern.

"I have to look for work after the resolution of this so-called Watergate case," he said. "I have to find a way of providing for my family and my children."

Mr. Hunt said that his wife, who had planned to return to Washington yesterday, had gone to Chicago "for a Christmas visit and an exchange of presents" with her cousin, Mrs. Harold C. Carlstead, and Mr. Carlstead, an accountant who has substantial investments in the motel business.

The investment had been "under discussion for a long period of time," the visit "seemed an apropos time" for her to deliver the \$10,000 to Mr. Carlstead, he said. He said that he had not accompanied his wife because, under the terms of his bail, "I have to get a court order to leave the tricounty [metropolitan Washington] area."

However, Mr. Hunt said he

did obtain permission for a brief trip to Chicago after receiving news of the plane crash.

Mr. Hunt would not say why his wife carried such a large sum in cash, but Mr. Carlstead, who was also present, conceded that it might appear strange without knowledge of the facts.

"If you were going to take \$10,000 to Chicago you wouldn't take it in cash, would you," he said. "I wouldn't, either, but

everyone does things a little differently."

The recovered cash was placed yesterday in the evidenc section vault of the Chicago police department, and Mr. Carlstead said he had been informed that the money "will apparently have to go through the Illinois courts" before being awarded to the executor of Mrs. Hunt's estate.