

Hunt: Testimony, character; nature Ervin investigation HW 2/10/74

Hunt is an unabashed not particularly imaginative liar, witness his telling me he had not read either Szulc's book on him or Woodward's review, which was in the same issue as Hunt's letter of complaint to the WxPost.

He toyed with the Ervin committee, using devices so standard I wonder how he knows them when his writing shows a profound ignorance of the courts and the law. He evaded every question to which he did not want to make specific answer. I can't think of a single point in the two days of hearings where this did not happen or where he was in any way pushed.

That he is not easily embarrassed and is not embarrassed by what he does and says is illustrated by his covering his own fumbling incompetence at WG, claiming instead that Baldwin was a double-agent, based on known fictions and manufactures.

(Here it is interesting ~~xxx~~ to compare the Bay Pigs Hunt, who quit the project when ordered to do what he didn't approve, and his claim to have gone through with the WG break-in simply because he was told to by Liddy and one is to suppose McCord.)

He showed no embarrassment when the spuriousness of his claim was exposed and the committee didn't learn from it.

I have read the testimony on breaks from more tiring work and at this writing have not quite finished it. But these observations can't be changed by what follows. My contemporaneous notes on his testimony, made while watching it, should be consistent with this. However, the printed work, which can be gone back over, is more compelling than the initial impressions.

It is as though the committee sat down and conspired to omit the essential. There were seven questioning members and majority and minority counsel. In direct examination no questions were asked about other jobs than those publicized prior to the hearing. When he dropped leads, like saying the FBI asked him almost no questions, or he worked daily on these projects, or there was daily WH input into the Ellsberg case, they were ignored. And when members blundered into these areas, as when he was once asked about other jobs, he was able to distract and lead away from that. Here he resorted to the fairly standard device of asking what period of time, which is a pretty clear indication that at some period he was engaged in other jobs. He was told what the questioner, I think Montoya, had in mind and he replied ~~negit~~ negatively, and Montoya wandered off on something else. But every member had a memo saying that his gang had been the one that broke into the Chilean embassy, paid with campaign funds for it. Other examples are why Bittman was no longer his lawyer, other CIA illegalities, domestic CIA activities and many other. All of these were relevant to the committee's responsibilities, although evasions in interpretation of mandate are easy. "National security" is an obvious and used one. They took Nixon's interpretation.

Hunt's facility in diverting the few unpleasant questions- which also bear on whether or not he had an ongoing deal- raise questions of preparation. It is possible if not probable that his lawyers prepared him for this, told him how to do it. His skill in use is another matter, not possible from merely being told how. Or, he is a devious person and in the past has practised the similar. But when everyone questioning him was a skilled lawyer, with experience in questioning witnesses and understanding evasions and evasive devices, there is no explanation of the committee's willingness to let itself be diverted by hackneyed devices, any more than there is of its not asking the obvious questions or of accepting incomplete answers.

Example of the essential unasked use of tax money in the campaign, not limited to "Allen, about which no questions were asked, Example of the perjury accepted, written contemporaneously, CIA, by all three top honchos. Hunt would have broken with vigorous questioning, I'm certain. The best of the early points was on double-agentry, where his ego would have collapsed. Example of covering White House, contents Hunt's safe, where he was allowed to ignore what committee had in public evidence.