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Hunt's Role SFC In Domestic Intelligence

By Seymour M. Hersh
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Washington

E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted Watergate burglar who pleaded guilty, told the Senate Watergate committee last year in still-unpublished testimony that he served as the first chief of covert action for the Central Intelligence Agency's Domestic Operations Division.

Hunt, testifying before the Senate investigators in closed session on Dec. 18, 1973, revealed that his domestic activities included the secret financing of a Washington news agency as well as the underwriting of the popular Fodor's Travel Guides, which are distributed by the David McKay Corp., a New York publishing firm.

A copy of Hunt's testimony before the Watergate committee, marked "confidential," was made available yesterday to the New York Times.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Hunt said that he

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spent about four years working for the Domestic Operations Division, beginning shortly after the unit was set up by the CIA in 1962.

Hunt, who is now free on bail and living in Miami pending appeal of his Watergate conviction, denied any involvement in or knowledge of domestic spying on radicals and other dissidents by the Domestic Operations Division. But he added that some of his projects from the 1962-66 period — which dealt largely with the subsidizing and manipulation of news and publishing organizations — did seem "to violate the intent of the agency's charter."

The New York Times, quoting a former undercover agent for the Domestic Operations Division, said on Sunday that the agent was directly involved in the monitoring of anti-war dissidents and radical groups in New York City beginning with the student uprisings at Colum-

bia University in 1968.

The disclosure of Hunt's testimony indicatee that questionable domestic activities by the CIA "apparently began under the Kennedy administration, continued during the Johnson Administration and, as well-informed sources have told the Times, reached a peak during the anti-war outbursts in opposition to President Nixon's Vietnam policy.

The Times also reported Sunday that the new domestic unit was formed in 1964, but Hunt recalled that it was assembled shortly after the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation in late 1961. Many agency men connected with that failure were shunted into the new domestic unit, Hunt said.

Yesterday the Times, quoting well-informed sources, reported that three more former high-level officials of the CIA's Counterintelligence Division have resigned, effective today, in the wake of the reports ear-

lier this month of massive domestic operations by the agency. The sudden retirement of James Angleton, director of the Counterintelligence Division, was made

known last week.

The White House and the CIA refused yesterday to discuss the reported shake-up in the Counterintelligence Division. "Whatever is happening at the CIA, the President is being kept informed of it," Ron Nessén, the White House press secretary, told newsmen at Vail, Colo.

Hunt, in his Senate testimony, told of being ordered to arrange for the daily pickup of "any and all information" that might be available in 1964 at the presidential campaign headquarters of Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep - Ariz.), then running against President Johnson. The Goldwater documents, Hunt said, were to be delivered to a White House aide, Chester L. Cooper, a former CIA official.

"I was opposed to this as a Goldwater Republican," Hunt testified. "I was told that it didn't make any difference, that President Johnson had ordered this activity, and that Cooper would be the recipient of the information."

In the interview, Hunt said that there had been strenuous opposition to the establishment of the Domestic Intelligence Division in 1962, particularly from Richard Helms, who later became the CIA director, and Thomas H. Karamessines, who later became the agency's chief of clandestine operations.

Hunt, who retired in 1970 after serving more than 20 years with the CIA, told the Watergate Committee that the domestic operations division had "established field stations in Boston and Chicago and San Francisco, to name a few cities. These were parallel to the extant overt CIA establishment (already set up in those cities), and a large variety of domestic-based operations were conducted by this division.

"My staff ran a media operation known as Continental Press out of the National Press Building in Washington," Hunt added. "We funded much of the activities of the Frederick D. Praeger Publishing Corp. in New York City. We funded to a large extent, the activities of Fodor's Travel Guide . . ."

CIA (domestic)
file Watergate

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