

Pentagon Plumbers

More detailed column
filed W/gate.



Jack Anderson

DEEP in the bowels of the Pentagon, another plumbers squad has been operating in the style of the notorious White House plumbers.

Its existence was mentioned by Bob Woodward, the Watergate reporter, in the Washington Post. He wrote about an alleged White House plot to assassinate me in late 1971 or early 1972.

He quoted W. Donald Stewart, a former Pentagon investigator, as saying he had been given "every resource in the book" to stop the leaks to our column. One effort alone, Stewart estimated, cost \$100,000.

Stewart claimed he had traced stories in our column to more than 60 classified documents. "Stewart said the leaks to (Jack) Anderson infuriated the White House to the point that then-President Nixon worried about his ability to conduct foreign affairs," wrote Woodward.

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THE FORMER President revealed the details of the secret Vietnam peace negotiations several weeks ahead of schedule, according to Stewart, because "they were afraid Jack Anderson was going to scoop them."

The truth is, of course, that we exposed Nixon's misrepresentations about the Vietnam war, the India-Pakistan conflict and the IIT-Nixon connections. We also revealed in 1971 that the CIA had attempted to assassinate undesirable foreign leaders.

What upset Nixon the most, according to our White House sources, was our revelation that billionaire Howard Hughes had sent two \$50,000 cash bundles, one to Key Biscayne, the other to San Clemente, for Nixon's use in between his presidential campaigns. The money was accepted by Nixon's friend, Bebe Rebozo.

It wasn't national security but political security, in other words, that caused the former President to unleash both the White House plumbers and the Pentagon plumbers, who operated out of room 3E993 in the Pentagon.

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THE MOST graphic account of the Pentagon plumbers in action has been provided by Navy Yeoman Charles Radford, who was also suspected of leaking information to us.

Testifying behind closed doors, he told the Senate Armed Services Committee how the Pentagon Plumbers had wrung a confession out of him. They grilled him abusively, strapped him to a lie detector, brought him back for more questioning and then repeated the process all over again. Radford testified until he broke down and wept.

Radford identified Stewart as his chief inquisitor.

Footnote: Stewart has denied any abuse of Radford and told us that the entire investigation was conducted by the book.