

C.I.A. Investigated Personal Life of a Top Nixon

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WASHINGTON, March 31—A Central Intelligence Agency operative, posing as a private detective, investigated the personal life of a top aide to Richard M. Nixon during his 1968 campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination, according to well-placed Federal officials.

The operative, Franklin R. Geraty, reportedly conducted the investigation under the auspices of a nonexistent New York City private detective firm that the officials said had been set up as a "front" for C.I.A. domestic operations.

The alleged target of the undercover inquiry was Richard V. Allen, a foreign affairs expert who shortly before had resigned from Stanford University's conservative Hoover Institution, a research center, to join Mr. Nixon as his national security adviser.

A high official of the C.I.A. confirmed that his agency had ordered a clandestine investigation of Mr. Allen, but he said it was entirely unrelated to his work in behalf of Mr. Nixon.

The C.I.A.'s domestic operations, about which relatively little is known, are under investigation by a Presidential commission and a Select Senate committee.

William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, has testified publicly about his agency's attempts, during the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies, to uncover foreign ties to the American antiwar movement.

But this is the first known instance of a domestic C.I.A. operative posing as a private detective in conducting an inquiry not directly related to the national security.

Personal Data Sought

On June 25, 1968, barely two weeks after Mr. Allen said he joined the Nixon campaign staff, Mr. Geraty appeared at the office of a banker in Palo Alto, Calif., where Mr. Allen had been living, and displayed a credential identifying himself as a representative of the Fidelity Reporting Service of New York City.

The banker, who asked that his name not be used, recalled in an interview that Mr. Geraty said he was seeking whatever personal information he might have on Mr. Allen. When asked the reason for the inquiry, the banker said, Mr. Geraty replied that he had been retained by the Republicans to conduct background checks on some Nixon aides.

The banker, who was not unknown in high Republican

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Adviser

circles, said that he became suspicious and sent Mr. Geraty away with the request to call back later. Then, he said, he telephoned Rose Mary Woods, Mr. Nixon's personal secretary, to verify the mysterious investigator's purpose.

According to the banker, Miss Woods checked and informed him that no such investigation of Mr. Allen or anyone else had been commissioned by the Nixon campaign.

Caulfield Made Inquiries

Sources familiar with the 1968 Nixon campaign said that the matter was referred to John J. Caulfield, a former New York City policeman who was then chief of staff security for Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Caulfield, who later gained prominence in the Watergate scandal through his subsequent role as a White House investigator, made inquiries about the Fidelity Reporting Service and reported back that it appeared to be a "C.I.A. outfit," the sources said.

They added, however, that the assertion that the C.I.A. had investigated a top Nixon aide was not made public by the Nixon campaign for fear that an attack on the Johnson Administration would move President Johnson to more enthusiastic support of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic nominee.

The investigation of Mr. Allen was first mentioned publicly by William Safire, a former Nixon speechwriter who is now a columnist for The New York Times, in "Before the Fall," Mr. Safire's recently published history of the Nixon Presidency.

Independent Investigation

An independent investigation by The Times established a number of details about the reported incident, all of which were subsequently confirmed by high officials of the C.I.A.

One C.I.A. official conceded last week that it might appear, on the surface, as though "we were watching the other side" during the 1968 Presidential campaign.

He said, however, that six months before Mr. Allen joined Mr. Nixon's staff, he had approached the C.I.A. for assistance on a research project.

Mr. Allen, who is 39 years old, was then a senior staff member of Stanford's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace and editor of its yearbook on international Communist affairs.

In that capacity, the C.I.A. official said, Mr. Allen met in January of 1968 with Richard Helms, then the Director of Central Intelligence, and asked to see various unclassified

During 1968 G.O.P.;

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agency reports on the strengths of national Communist parties.

Mr. Helms agreed, the official said, to make the materials available, and Mr. Allen continued to deal with the agency on an informal basis during the spring of 1968.

'We Farmed the Job Out'

On March 27 of that year, the official continued, the C.I.A. decided independently that it wished to make available to Mr. Allen certain classified publications that bore on his work.

A background investigation to secure the necessary clearance was ordered, the official said, "and we farmed the job out to one of our investigators in the San Francisco area."

The C.I.A. official during an

interview produced a document relating to the investigation that carried the March 27 date and showed the name of the investigator as Franklin R. Geraty.

Mr. Geraty, whose present "cover" is that of a Defense Department investigator, repeatedly declined to answer questions about the Allen investigation that were put to him by a reporter at Mr. Geraty's home in San Francisco.

A Pentagon official, asked whether the Pentagon was aware that Mr. Geraty was working for the C.I.A. under Defense Department cover, said that it was. "I think we've done this for them before," he added.

The C.I.A. official conceded

that his records showed no request from Mr. Allen to view any classified materials or anything else, beyond the agency's own initiative, that would have warranted a covert background security check.

Following Mr. Nixon's victory in November of 1968, Mr. Allen, a husky, bespectacled six-footer, joined the staff of Henry A. Kissinger, who by then had replaced him as Mr. Nixon's national security adviser.

Mr. Allen later became deputy assistant to Mr. Nixon for international economic affairs. He now operates a private economic consulting firm here.

Reached by telephone in Florida, where he is vacationing, Mr. Allen differed with the C.I.A. official on some details

of his relations with the agency that it said had led to its investigation.

'Partly Precautionary'

His first approach of the C.I.A. in January of 1968, he said, was no more than a request "for them to look at our chapters [of the yearbook] when we finished them," with a view toward eliminating any "egregious errors" such as misspelled foreign names.

The approach was also "partly precautionary," he said, "because we didn't want them interfering or trying to offer us money. We didn't want trouble from them." Mr. Allen explained that he was concerned that the C.I.A. might try to provide some financial sup-

port for the yearbook project, as he said it had for other publications that advanced certain political lines to which it was partial.

Mr. Allen said that, "to the best of my recollection," he had not asked Mr. Helms or anyone else at the C.I.A. for unclassified information on international Communism, and he asserted emphatically that he had never asked the agency for any classified materials.

The first indication that he had been the subject of a covert C.I.A. investigation came, he said, from Mr. Geraty's visit to the Palo Alto banker in June.

He said that well before March 27, 1968, the date that the C.I.A. documents show the

investigation was begun, "it was generally widely known" in the Stanford community and Republican circles "that I would be going to the [Nixon] campaign."

Skepticism Expressed

Mr. Allen also expressed skepticism over the C.I.A.'s assertion that it had not learned of his month-old appointment to the Nixon Campaign staff until the end of July of 1968. He pointed to reports published before then referring to his appointment and also to the California banker's recollection that Mr. Geraty, when asked on June 25 for whom he was working, had replied "the Republicans."

Mr. Allen added that he was

"categorically opposed" to the C.I.A.'s clandestine efforts to gather information about him, whether for legitimate or political motives, under the guise of a bogus detective agency. He termed the incident "a clear violation of the charter of the C.I.A."

The C.I.A. official, asked about the use of the Fidelity Reporting Service as an agency cover, replied with a chuckle that it had "worked fine up to now."

It could not be learned, in what other domestic investigation, if any, either Mr. Geraty or the Fidelity Reporting Service have been employed by the

C.I.A.