

Motive Is Big Mystery In Raid on Democrats

NYTimes By WALTER RUGABER JUN 26 1972
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WASHINGTON, June 25 — Moving through the basement after midnight, the guard found strips of tape across the latches of two doors leading to the underground garage.

It was an altogether fit beginning for a first-rate mystery — the raid on the Democratic National Committee headquarters.

In the eight days since, the White House and the Republican party have been embarrassed, the Democrats have sensed a big election-year issue and a major Federal investigation has begun.

The mystery has involved Republican officials, agents or former agents of the Central Intelligence Agency, White House aides and bewildering assortments of anti-Castro Cubans.

Guard Not Alarmed

There has been talk of telephone taps, spy cameras and stolen files; of obscure corporations and large international financial transactions; of unsolved raids on chancery offices and on influential Washington law firms.

The guard, Frank Wills, a tall, 24-year-old bachelor who earned \$80 a week patrolling one of the office buildings in the Watergate complex for General Security Services,* Inc., was not greatly alarmed when he found the tape.

The high-priced hotel rooms, prestigious offices and elegant condominium apartments within the Watergate development had been favorite targets of Washington's burglars and sneak thieves for several years. Along with three present or

former Cabinet officers and various other Republican leaders, the tenants included the Democratic National Committee. Its offices had been entered at least twice within the last

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six weeks.

But Mr. Wills assumed that the office building's maintenance men had immobilized the latches. He tore off the strips of tape, allowing the two doors to lock, and returned to his post in the lobby.

Ten minutes later, acting on what he now calls a "hunch," he returned to the basement. The latches were newly taped. So were two others, on a lower level, that had been unobstructed only minutes before.

"Somebody was taping the doors faster than I was taking it off," Mr. Mills said in an interview later. "I called the police." His alarm was logged at the central station at 1:52 A.M. on Saturday, June 17.

It took less than 48 hours for the authorities to clamp a fairly tight lid on things. Much of the information that emerged afterward, even on the most pedestrian points, was unofficial or leaked by unnamed sources.

And none of it established motive. Washington went on a speculative binge, but even those running the investigation were said to be confused and uncertain. The available facts offered many possible interpretations.

More Tape Found

First to reach the Watergate were plainclothes members of the Second District Tactical Squad. They went first to the eighth and top floor, where tape was found on a stairway door. Nothing else was amiss, however.

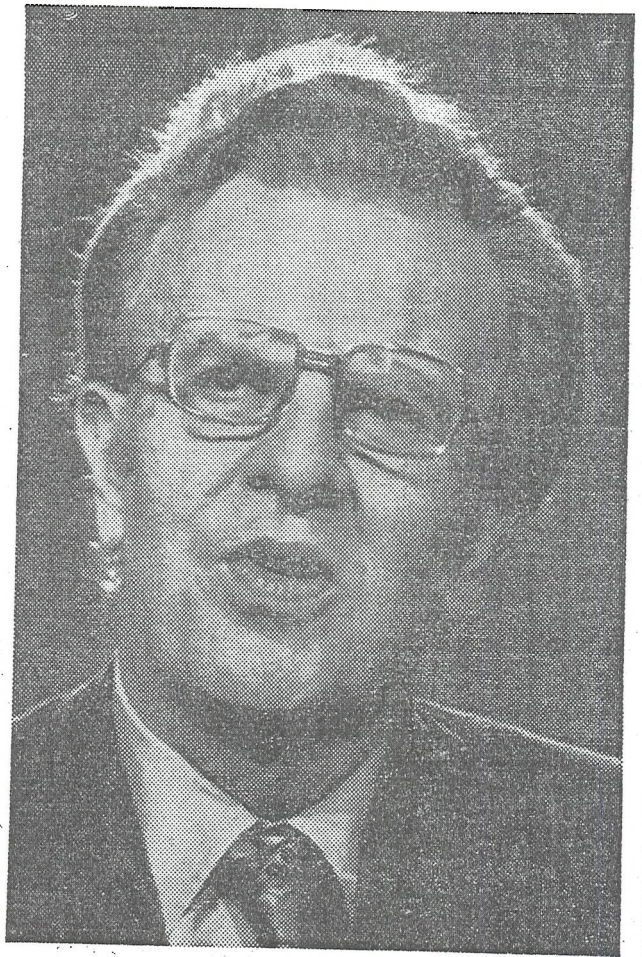
Working their way down, they found more tape on the sixth floor. With guns drawn, they entered the darkened offices of the Democratic National Committee. Crouched there were five unarmed men, who surrendered quietly.

"They didn't admit what they were doing there," said John Barret, one of the plainclothes men who handcuffed the five and lined them up against a wall. "They were very polite, but they wouldn't talk."

Presumably, there was plenty to talk about—the taped latches, for example.

For one thing, taping the doors was a dead giveaway. Ordinarily, burglars use wooden match sticks. Also, why did anyone bother with the door on the eighth floor?

Furthermore, once the tampering had been discovered, it was risky in the extreme to repeat it. Who did it? And why were two separate basement entrances taped the second time?



Associated Press

SEEKS INVESTIGATION: Lawrence F. O'Brien, Democratic party chairman, during TV appearance yesterday. He said walkie-talkies carried by men arrested for raid at party headquarters were licensed to James W. McCord Jr., former security officer for the Republican National Committee. Mr. O'Brien has asked President Nixon for a special prosecutor to handle inquiry into matter.

Why, in fact, were any of the doors open freely from the inside, and once entrance to the building had been gained, an intruder could have left without keys and without setting off an alarm.

Too Many Men

Five men were found in the Democratic offices, which struck those informed in such matters as three or four too many.

The five men were charged with burglary and led off to the District of Columbia jail, where they all gave false names to the booking officer. After a routine fingerprint check, they were identified as follows:

Bernard L. Barker, 55 years old, a native of Havana who fled the Fidel Castro regime and became an American citizen. He is president of Barker Associates, a Miami real estate concern.

James Walter McCord Jr., 53, a native of Texas. He is now president of McCord Associates, Inc. of suburban Rockville, Md., a private security agency.

Frank Sturgis, 48, who lost his citizenship for fighting in the Castro army but regained it later. He has changed his name from Frank Florini but is still known under both names. He works at the Hampton Roads Salvage Company, Miami.

Eugenio R. Martinez, 51; a man with \$7,199 in his savings account and who works as a notary public and as a li-

* General Security Services - see N.O. States-Item 11 Oct 72.

censed real estate operator. He now works for Mr. Barker's agency and is said to earn \$1,000 a month.

Virgilio R. Gonzalez, 45, a locksmith at the Missing Link Key Shop, Miami. He is reported to have been a house painter and a barber in Cuba, which he fled after Mr. Castro's takeover in 1959.

All except Mr. McCord left Miami Friday afternoon, apparently on Eastern Airlines Flight 190, which arrived at Washington National Airport at 3:59 P.M. Mr. Barker used his American Express credit card to rent a car at that time.

The four men checked into two rooms—214 and 314—at the Watergate Hotel. They are understood to have dined that evening in the hotel restaurant. The hotel connects with the office building through the underground garage.

What Police Seized

The police collected what the five men had with them at the time of their arrest and obtained warrants to search the two hotel rooms and the rented automobile. An inventory included:

Two 35-mm. cameras equipped with close-up lens attachments, about 40 rolls of unexposed 35-mm. film, one roll of film from a Minox "spy" camera and a high intensity lamp—all useful in copying documents.

Two or three microphones and transmitters. Two ceiling panels had been removed in an office adjacent to that of the party chairman, Lawrence F. O'Brien, and it was theorized that the equipment was being installed, replaced or removed.

An assortment of what were described as lock picks and burglary tools, two walkie-talkie radios, several cans and pen-like canisters of Chemical Mace and rubber surgical gloves, which all five men had been wearing.

Nearly \$6,000 in cash. The money, found in the possession of the five and in the two hotel rooms, included some \$5,300 in \$100 bills bearing consecutive serial numbers.

Parts of the Democratic headquarters had been ransacked. Mr. O'Brien subsequently said that the party's opponents could have found an array of sensitive material, but no pattern to the search has been disclosed.

Last Sunday, the Associated Press discovered from Republican financial records filed with the Government that Mr. McCord worked for both the Committee to Re-Elect the President and the Republican National Committee.

'Security Coordinator'

The records showed that since January Mr. McCord had received \$1,209 a month as "security coordinator" for the Nixon organization, and that since October he was paid more than \$600 a month for guard services for the Republican unit.

The following day it was learned that in address books taken by the police from Mr. Barker and Mr. Martinez the name of E. (for Everette) Howard Hunt appeared. Mr. Hunt had worked, as recently as March 29, as a White House consultant.

The police also turned up in the belongings of the five suspects an unmailed envelope that contained Mr. Hunt's check for \$6, made out to the Lakewood Country Club in Rockville, and a bill for the same amount.

Both Mr. Hunt and Mr. McCord were members of the Rockville Club, and there were published reports that Mr. Hunt met with Mr. Barker in Miami two weeks before the break-in.

The White House said that Mr. Hunt worked 87 days in 1971 and 1972 under Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President. Mr. Colson has frequently handled sensitive political assignments.

The consultant, who is the author of 42 novels under several pen names, works full time as a writer for Robert R. Mullen & Co., a Washington public relations firm with long-

standing Republican connections.

The firm's president, Robert F. Bennett, quoted Mr. Hunt as saying he "was nowhere near that place [the Watergate] Saturday." The writer has declined public comment, however, and Mr. Bennett has suspended him.

Security Man Dropped

The Republicans quickly discharged Mr. McCord as their security man and denied emphatically that they had had any connection with the raid on the Democratic headquarters.

"We want to emphasize that this man [Mr. McCord] and the other people involved were not operating either on our behalf or with our consent," said John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General who is now head of the Nixon committee.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said that "a third-rate burglary attempt" was unworthy of comment by him and asserted that "certain elements may try to stretch this beyond what it is."

The White House pointed out that there was no evidence that either Mr. Colson or Mr. Hunt had been involved in any way in the raid on the Democrats, and several high-ranking police officials privately advanced the same view.

The Democratic National Committee, however, filed a \$1-million civil suit against the five accused raiders and against the Committee to Re-Elect the President, charging that the Democrat's civil rights and privacy had been violated.

Mr. Mitchell described this as "another example of sheer demagoguery on the part of Mr. O'Brien." Mr. O'Brien said that there was "a developing clear line to the White House."

Stories About Spies

More or less simultaneously with the political exchanges, the reports about former spies began to come in. All five of the arrested men were said to have had ties to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Hunt, operating under the code name "Eduardo," was described as the man in direct charge of the abortive invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in 1961. He is known to have worked for the C.I.A. from 1949 to 1970.

Mr. Barker also worked for the C.I.A. He was reported to have been Mr. Hunt's "paymaster" for the Cuban landing and, under the code name "Macho," to have established the secret invasion bases in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Mr. McCord, too, was a C.I.A. agent. After three years with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, he joined the intelligence unit in 1951 and resigned in 1970. His role in the Bay of Pigs was understood to be relatively minor.

The spy angles led directly to the Cuban refugee angle. It was disclosed that on the weekend of May 26-29, eight men who described themselves as representatives of an organization called "Ameritas" registered at the Watergate Hotel.

The eight included those arrested in Democratic headquarters except Mr. McCord. It was also disclosed that during that May weekend there was a burglary of the Democratic offices.

"Ameritas" turned out to be an obscure real estate concern in Miami. One of the principals was a close friend of Mr. Barkers, but none of the arrested men ever owned an interest in the company.

A man who does, Miguel A. Suarez, a prominent lawyer in the Cuban community, said that Mr. Barker had made "unauthorized" use of the Ameritas letterheads in making reservations at the Watergate for the eight men.

Search Is On For Four

The F.B.I. began a nationwide search for the four others who stayed there, and the theory grew that if "Ameritas" was not, as the police had speculated, a right-wing, anti-Castro paramilitary unit, there must be one somewhere.

The Chilean chancery, repre-

senting a left-wing Government, was mysteriously searched during the night of May 13-14, and the door of a law firm with several prominent Democrats as members was tampered with on the night of May 15-16.

Some of the \$100 bills found by the police appear to have been withdrawn from Mr. Barker's Miami bank. The money had been deposited there in the form of checks drawn on the Banco Internacional, S.A., Mexico City.

There are countless anti-Castro organizations in the Miami area, ranging in size from one member to hundreds, and many of them are devoted to plotting. Among those cited in connection with the break-in was one involving veterans of the Bay of Pigs.

While it was conjectured that a Cuban group might have been seeking to curry favor with the Republicans or to battle leftists, this theory, like all the others, was uncertain.