

Watergate-- A Report on FBI's Probe

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Washington

FBI agents have established that the Watergate bugging incident stemmed from a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage conducted on behalf of President Nixon's re-election and directed by officials of the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The activities, according to information in FBI and Department of Justice files, were aimed at all the major Democratic presidential contenders and—since 1971—represented a basic strategy of the Nixon re-election effort.

A spokesman for the Committee for the Re-election of the President was told last night of this general information gathered by the Washington Post. He said: "The Post story is not only fiction but a collection of absurdities."

REFUSAL

Asked to discuss the specific points raised in the story, the spokesman, DeVan L. Shumway, refused on the ground that "the entire matter is in the hands of the authorities."

Law enforcement sources said that probably the best example of the sabotage was the fabrication—by a White House aide—of a letter-to-the-editor alleging that Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem.-Maine) condoned a racial slur on Americans of French-American descent as "Canucks."

The letter was published in the Manchester Union Leader February 24, less than two weeks before the New Hampshire primary. It in part triggered Muskie's "crying speech" before the newspaper's office.

Washington Post staff writer Marilyn Berger reported that Ken W. Clawson, deputy director of White House communications, told her in a conversation on

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September 25 that, "I wrote the letter."

DENIAL

Interviewed again yesterday, Clawson denied that he had claimed authorship of the "Canuck" letter.

B. J. McQuaid, editor-in-chief of the Union Leader, said earlier this year that Clawson had been "useful" to the paper in connection with the "Canuck" letter. Although McQuaid did not elaborate, he said that he believed the original letter was authentic.

Clawson denied that he provided any assistance with the letter.

Immediately following his "crying speech," Muskie's standing began to slip.

During their Watergate investigation, federal agents established that hundreds of thousands of dollars in Nixon campaign contributions had been set aside to pay for an extensive undercover campaign aimed at discrediting individual Democratic presidential candidates and disrupting their campaigns.

NORMAL

"Intelligence work" is normal during a campaign and is said to be carried out by both political parties.

But federal investigators said what they uncovered being done by the Nixon forces is unprecedented in scope and intensity.

They said it included: Following members of Democratic candidates' families, forging letters and distributing them under the candidates' letterheads, leaking false and manufactured

items to the press, throwing campaign schedules into disarray, seizing confidential campaign files and investigating the lives of dozens of Democratic campaign workers.

In addition, investigators said the activities included planting agents provocateurs in the ranks of organizations expected to demonstrate at the Republican and Democratic conventions.

Three attorneys have told the Washington Post that as early as mid-1971 they were asked to work as agents provocateurs on behalf of the Nixon campaign. They said they were asked to undermine the primary campaigns of Democratic candidates by a man who has been identified in FBI reports as an operative of the Nixon re-election organization.

All three lawyers said they turned down the offers, which purportedly included the promise of "big jobs" in Washington after President Nixon's re-election. They said the overtures were made by Donald Herbert Segretti, 31, a former Treasury Department lawyer who lives in Marina Del Rey, Calif.

Segretti denied making the offers.

DETAILS

(Biographical details about Segretti are minimal.

(From Army colleagues and classmates at the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California in Berkeley, it is known that he was reared on the West Coast.

(After receiving his law degree he served as a Treasury Department attorney in Washington for less than a year, according to friends, and then entered the Army as an officer in the Judge Advocate General Corps.

(About a year of Segretti's Army service, friends said, was spent in Vietnam, with Americal Division headquarters in Chu Lai and U.S. Army-Vietnam headquarters at Long Binh.

(Segretti returned to the United States for the latter part of his military service

and was stationed at Fort Ord until his discharge sometime in the second half of 1971, according to friends.)

OPERATIVES

According to FBI reports, at least 50 undercover Nixon operatives traveled throughout the country trying to disrupt and spy on Democratic campaigns.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the whole Watergate investigation, the investigators say, was that numerous specific acts of political sabotage and spying were all traced to this scheme, which was conceived and directed in the White House and by President Nixon's re-election committee.

The investigators said that a major purpose of the sub-Rosa activities was to create so much confusion, suspicion and dissension that the Democrats would be incapable of uniting after choosing a presidential nominee.

The FBI's investigation of the Watergate incident definitely established that virtually all the acts against the Democrats were financed by a secret, fluctuating \$350,000 to \$700,000 campaign fund that was controlled by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell while he headed the Justice Department. Later, when he served as President Nixon's campaign manager, Mitchell shared control of the fund with others.

According to sources close to the Watergate investigation, much of the FBI's information is expected to be revealed at the trial of the seven men indicted on charges of conspiring to eavesdrop on Democratic headquarters at the Watergate.

"There is some very powerful information," said one federal official, "especially if it becomes known before November 7."

STORY

According to the three attorneys interviewed by the Post, Segretti attempted to hire them in 1971 as undercover agents working in behalf of President Nixon's re-election.

One of the lawyers, Alex B. Shipley, a Democrat who is now assistant attorney general of the state of Tennessee, said Segretti told him that "money would be no problem, but the people we would be working for wanted results for the cash that would be spent."

Shipley, 30, added: "He (Segretti) also told me that we would be taken care of after Nixon's re-election, that I would get a good job in government."

WORK

According to Shipley, Segretti said the undercover work would require false identification papers under an assumed name; that Shipley recruit five more persons, preferably lawyers, for the job; that they would attempt to disrupt the schedules of Democratic candidates and obtain information from their campaign organizations; that Shipley would not reveal to Segretti the names of the men he would hire, and that Segretti could never reveal to Shipley specifically who was supplying the money for the operation.

In addition to Shipley, Roger Lee Nix of Dennison, Iowa, and Kenneth Griffiths of Atlanta, Ga., said they turned down similar offers from Segretti.