

Republican 'Agent': A Secretive Man With Friends

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LOS ANGELES, Oct. 15 —

Donald H. Segretti, the 31-year-old lawyer accused of recruiting agents to harass and disrupt Democratic political campaigns, has led a shadowy and secretive life since his discharge from the Army last year.

An investigation by The New York Times has disclosed that Mr. Segretti told contradictory stories about whom he was working for and where he received his apparently sizable income. He has traveled constantly, rented and furnished a fashionable apartment, bought an expensive sports car and talked about purchasing a boat.

The investigation also revealed that while in college, Mr. Segretti was a close associate of Dwight Chapin, now a personal assistant to President Nixon, and was acquainted with several other men who now are White House aides.

At least four persons in addition to those identified in articles last week have told The Times that they were approached by Mr. Segretti and asked to perform undercover work on behalf of President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Charges Are Denied

The Washington Post has reported that Mr. Segretti was part of a broad campaign conducted by the Committee for the Re-election of the President to spy on and sabotage Democratic political activities. The newspaper said the campaign included the break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate complex in Washington, an incident that has led to the indictment of seven men, including two former aides at the White House.

Mr. Segretti denied the report and the re-election committee called it "a collection of absurdities." Attempts to reach Mr. Segretti for comment on information acquired by The Times were unsuccessful.

Donald Segretti's paternal grandparents emigrated from Italy and settled in Salinas, Calif., where they ran a hotel and restaurant. Mr. Segretti's father, also a hotel manager, came to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California and stayed on here. The younger Segretti followed his father to U.S.C., where he got his first taste of politics.

A Successful Candidate

In 1962, during his junior year, Mr. Segretti was part of an insurgent group called Trojans for Representative Government, which led an attack on the college's political establishment. Mr. Chapin, a long-time associate of President Nixon who is now concerned mainly with political affairs, was chairman of the group's campaign. Mr. Segretti was one of the

party's successful candidates for the student senate.

Mr. Chapin was identified in news reports this morning as one of Mr. Segretti's "contact" men in Washington for his espionage operations, but Mr. Chapin denied the allegation.

The report also said that another Segretti contact was Gordon Strachan, now on the staff of H. R. Haldeman, the President's chief administrative aide and a leading political adviser. Mr. Strachan was also a student at U.S.C. in the early nineteen-sixties.

The president of Trojans for Representative Government was Michael Guhin, now a staff member of the National Security Council working in the area of science and technology. Mr. Guhin, who has offices in the Executive Office Building across the street from the White House, said that he was "shocked" at the news reports concerning Mr. Segretti and that he had not seen him for several years.

The political activities of this group did not end on the campus. Mr. Chapin became involved in the unsuccessful 1962 California gubernatorial campaign of Richard M. Nixon, and recruited Mr. Segretti to work with him that fall, according to Jerry K. Staub, a local lawyer who knew both men in college.

One of Mr. Nixon's aides during that campaign was Ron Ziegler, now President's press secretary. Mr. Ziegler graduated from U.S.C. in 1961, two years before Mr. Chapin and Mr. Segretti.

While he was on the campus, Mr. Ziegler was president of Sigma Chi fraternity and a roommate of Tim Elbourne, yet another former U.S.C. student in the Nixon Administration. Mr. Chapin was also president of Sigma Chi two years later; the fraternity house is just across the street from Phi Sigma Kappa, where Mr. Segretti belonged.

The long-term association of these men can also be traced to the Knights, an honorary service organization on campus to which Mr. Chapin, Mr. Segretti, and Mr. Guhin all belonged at the same time.

'They Put It Over'

"I kind of thought that eventually Don would get into politics," said his uncle, Sisti Segretti, a lawyer in Salinas. "When he was at U. S. C., he was part of a group that went out and nominated somebody they wanted for president, and they put it over. They really thought they had accomplished a lot."

After graduation, Mr. Segretti studied in England for a year and then attended Boalt Hall, the law school of the University of California in Berkeley. He took a job with the Treasury De-

partment in Washington after leaving Boalt, but was soon drafted. Within several months he was able to win a transfer to the Judge Advocate General's staff, the Army's legal branch.

As Captain Segretti, he spent at least a year at Longbinh, South Vietnam. It was there that he met Alex B. Shipley, an assistant attorney general in Tennessee, who has previously asserted that Mr. Segretti tried to recruit him for political espionage work.

During his last year in the service, before his release in September 1971, Mr. Segretti was stationed at Fort Ord, Calif. He still has many good friends at the Army post, and last week they described him as an affable, easy-going fellow who expressed liberal political opinions.

According to these friends, Mr. Segretti had a peace symbol printed on his checks, hung "Free Huey" posters on his walls, and helped organize a short-lived chapter of the Concerned Officers Movement, an antiwar and antimilitary group.

As a lawyer and hearing officer, Mr. Segretti consistently favored soldiers who had applied for conscientious objector status. In one case, he specifically asked to defend an Army doctor who had appealed for a C.O. discharge.

Toward the end of his stay at Ford Ord, Mr. Segretti became extremely secretive about his plans, according to friends. Some thought he was going to work for a law firm in Los An-

geles. One lawyer remembered that "he talked about a job in Washington, having to do with friends he had back there."

"He was flying back there for an interview with one of the government agencies," the lawyer recalls. "I asked him which one, and I wouldn't get an answer. I'd say it was probably the F.B.I. or the C.I.A., and we'd all laugh."

Stories Are Similar

It was during the summer of 1971 that Mr. Segretti started making flying trips around the country, even though he was still in the Army. In June he went to Washington and got in touch with Mr. Shipley, who has said that Mr. Segretti offered him a job (that involved working under a false identity, trying to disrupt Democratic campaigns, and obtaining private information. When he asked for whom he would be working, Mr. Segretti allegedly replied "Nixon.")

At least two other former Army lawyers told similar stories. This week, further investigation turned up several more contacts. A former acquaintance of Mr. Segretti said that the lawyer visited her last November "and asked me if I was interested in becoming a

in High

spy."

She said that Mr. Segretti told her that she would really be working for the Republicans and explained, as an example, that she would "go in to McGovern headquarters and act as if I was all for McGovern. . . . Go over there and tell them I was very interested. Just watch and see what they did, just sort of look around."

Mr. Segretti said the work would be part-time at first, but that "maybe I would become more important and I would be hired," said the woman, who lives in Maryland.

She added that "from what he said he was working out of his law office—but it was just a front." Mr. Segretti swore her to secrecy, and made it clear that his current job was "an excellent chance for him to make the great leap forward" into a position of political influence, the woman said.

Judge Allegedly Approached

Capt. Thomas Wallace, a military judge at Ford Ord, has told several friends that Mr. Segretti approached him last year with a proposal to work for President Nixon and "infiltrate" the campaign for Gov. George Wallace of Alabama. Captain Wallace, a native of Mississippi, apparently rejected the offer and refused to discuss it with a reporter.

Robert Pitman, Mr. Segretti's cousin and a lawyer in Salinas, was also offered a job that had "something to do with politics." In an interview, Mr. Pitman recalled: "It was all very hush-hush, he was very secretive and said I wouldn't even know the names of the people I was working for."

"It all sounded very dashing and romantic," said Mr. Pitman, a 29-year-old bachelor. "Fly here, fly there, all expenses paid. I know all his expenses were paid, because I asked him. But I didn't know by whom."

After Mr. Segretti left the Army, he took an apartment in

Places

Marina del Rey, a plush, new area of Los Angeles that attracts mainly "swinging singles" types. By all accounts, his furniture is new and expensive. He sold his aging Mustang and bought a white Mercedes-Benz.

But not one of Mr. Segretti's friends interviewed has ever been able to find out exactly where he works, or for whom.

News reports today alleged that Mr. Segretti was being paid through a secret fund at the Committee for the Re-election of the President that was administered by Herbert Kalmbach, a lawyer in Newport Beach, Calif., who is very close to the President.

'Sounded a Little Odd'

Capt. Robert Kirby, another Fort Ord lawyer, spent a week visiting Mr. Segretti last fall. Mr. Segretti told Captain Kirby that he was working for a local law firm, which had been retained to recruit workers for the Nixon campaign.

"He also indicated that he had a couple of business clients, which sounded a little odd," Captain Kirby said. "In the military you get away from civil law completely. It would be odd to hand over corporate clients to him without some period of adjustment."

During Captain Kirby's visit, Mr. Segretti never went to an "office." When the captain left, Mr. Segretti gave him an office phone number. But when the captain tried to call, he was told that the number had been disconnected.

When Mr. Segretti rented his apartment, he filled out a form and listed as his employers the firm of Segretti, Pitman in Salinas. But his uncle, Sisti Segretti, denied this week that his nephew had ever been associated with the firm, except to direct an occasional case to it.

"I'm Pitman," added his cousin, Robert, "and he never worked for me."

Here in Los Angeles, Mr. Segretti told one old Army buddy that he worked at a firm called Harrington & Wanger. Extensive inquiries produced no firm by that name.

Went Away Often

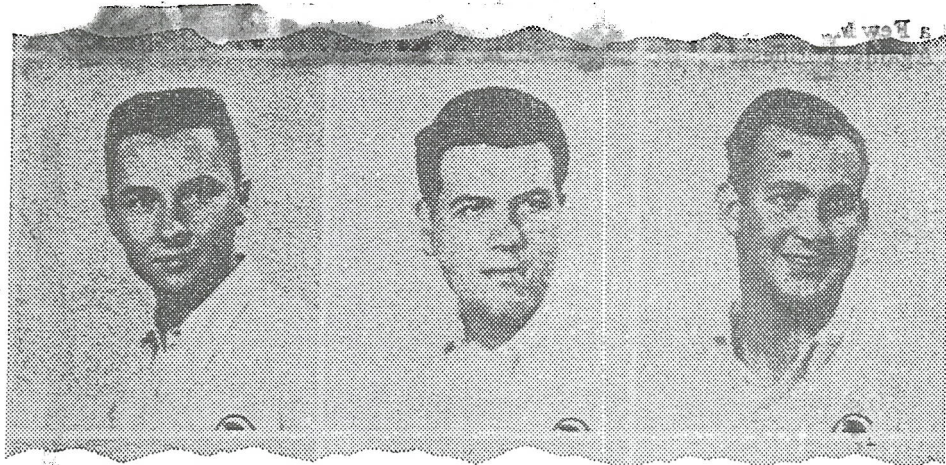
Neighbors at Marina del Rey had the vague impression that Mr. Segretti worked at a bank building in downtown Los Angeles, but none had ever seen his office. They did say he went away often, and gave his apartment key to a girl, who came in to water the tomato plants he grew on his small patio.

When he was home, he liked to ride his bicycle around the marina. Occasionally he gave a party, described as "restrained and respectable" compared to some others in the area. Apparently, he often visited his ailing mother, who lived in the vicinity, and sometimes cooked her breakfast, according to the

building superintendent. His parents would not consent to be interviewed.

Given Mr. Segretti's rather outspoken liberal opinions, many of his friends were surprised to hear that he was working for President Nixon. But they were not surprised to hear he was involved in politics. As one former girlfriend, a nurse, put it:

"I think he wanted to be in the White House. We were sitting around one night, and we decided that if there was anyone we knew who would wind up as a Presidential aide or in the headlines, it would be Don. He would hate most being stowed away doing some monotonous, unglamorous job. He was looking for excitement, challenge, big stakes, a big game."



Donald H. Segretti, left, as he appeared in the 1963 yearbook of the University of Southern California. Dwight Chapin, bottom left, was also at U.S.C. that year.

