

(Companion article by James M. Naughton, "McGovern Asserts Nixon Puts U.S. in 'Moral Crisis'," pasted separately.)

New Account of Sabotage

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Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 25—A

young California businessman said today that he had been recruited and paid by Donald H. Segretti to sabotage Democratic political rallies and gather intelligence from the party's campaign headquarters.

He said that he did not know the precise origin of the money he had received, but that he assumed it had come from the campaign to re-elect President Nixon.

"I imagine it came out of campaign funds," he said in an interview. "Negative campaigning is as much a part of politics as pro campaigning."

"I'm a good Republican," added the agent, who would not allow his name to be used because, he said, he was afraid of legal repercussions. "Where I hope to go in life, their philosophy fits better with my way of thinking."

The White House has insisted that it does not "condone" political sabotage and that all reports of a widespread campaign to disrupt and harass Democratic candidates are based on "hearsay" evidence.

But the agent interviewed by

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The New York Times has provided one of the strongest and most detailed accounts to date of what the alleged campaign of disruption involved and how it worked.

The agent, who is in his early thirties, is engaged in a business in the Los Angeles area. He said he has known Mr. Segretti since their days together at the University of Southern California.

Mr. Segretti has been identified in news reports as a key operative in a national campaign of sabotage against the Democrats. Several publications have linked Mr. Segretti to Dwight L. Chapin, a close aide to President Nixon who is one of Mr. Segretti's oldest friends.

The New York Times reported last week that at least 28 phone calls charged to Mr. Segretti's home phone or his credit card were made earlier this year to the White House, to Mr. Chapin's home, or to the home or office of E. Howard Hunt Jr. Mr. Hunt is a former White House consultant who was indicted for the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington.

Understanding Is Reached

In addition, 13 phone calls were made from Mr. Segretti's phone to the home telephone of the California agent over a period of five months. It was through these calls that The New York Times found the agent.

After Mr. Segretti was discharged from the Army in September, 1971, he moved to Los Angeles and reportedly made contact with his old friend, the businessman. The businessman said that he "more or less" had known Mr. Segretti was involved in the Presidential campaign and that Mr. Segretti had known he was also interested in getting involved. So, they came to a "mutual" understanding, the agent said.

The agent said that, from March through May, he performed about a dozen jobs

but was limited by business and family obligations. Usually he said, he received his assignments from Mr. Segretti directly or through the mail. All letters were typed on plain white paper, with no return address or signature, the agent said.

For example, the agent said, he might be asked to hire pickets to "disrupt" a rally for Senator Edmund S. Muskie and hand out leaflets attacking the Senator's stand on such issues as the busing of schoolchildren.

"Muskie was the main concern," the man said. "This was a month or two before the California primary, and who ever heard of McGovern? Muskie had it all wrapped up."

The agent said that he could not remember the exact details of the leaflets, but he recalled something like "What about your kids, Senator?" The leaflets then went on to say that Senator Muskie kept his children in all-white private schools, he said.

Avoided Use of Name

The agent's instructions, either oral or written, would tell him where to meet another contact, what name to use and what name to ask for, he said. Bars were a favorite meeting place, he recalled.

"The people I met didn't have the foggiest notion who I was," the agent related. "They usually thought I was from somewhere else, like Oklahoma City. I'd buy them a few drinks, talk a little, then say I needed some pickets. Maybe some blacks or Chicanos, maybe some straight-laced college kids. People always wanted more money than I could supply, so I'd tell them, 'Take this, it will cover your expenses for now, but we've got a lot more planned for you.' But I never intended to see them again."

"I never used my right name, in case something like this happened," the agent said, referring to the current furor over charges of political espionage.

In most cases, the agent said, he would take with him money that had been given to him by

Mr. Segretti or mailed in a plain white envelope. He said that he sometimes also took leaflets that Mr. Segretti, or others had printed. The going price was about \$50 to \$100 for a small group of pickets, the agent said.

The agent said that he himself also received expenses and some additional money, but he estimated that the total was less than \$1,000 for all his work.

The pickets were never told to cause violence, the agent insisted, but they were told to "disrupt" the event by carrying signs and shouting slogans critical of the Democratic candidate. He explained the reason by saying:

"Let's say McGovern came to town. I wouldn't be interested in what he's got to say, so I wouldn't go. But the news media would cover it, and it would come out being all pro-McGovern. Every time he said something anti-Nixon there would be big applause, and that would get on the TV news. So if we got some people there with signs, there would not be quite as much favorable coverage on the news."

Cites Lake of Time

Asked why he had to pay people for such work, the agent answered, "The radicals tend to be more pro-McGovern, and they're more apt to show up at a Nixon rally. The majority for Nixon are more conservative. A businessman won't take time off to go out to Cal State with a picket sign."

The agent estimated that he hired pickets on about a half-dozen occasions. He said that he also met a similar number of times with people who had volunteered to work in Senator Muskie's campaign offices here and were spitting out information.

The agent said that he had been asked by Mr. Segretti to go to other states and organize similar activities but that he did not have the time. He said that he "assumes" such activities were quite widespread but that the only other state he knew anything about was Florida, because Mr. Segretti called him frequently from there.