

Lawyers, Sleuths on Watergate Staff

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 8—In their various pasts they have prosecuted bank robbers and moonshiners, tracked missing persons, broken rings of credit-card thieves, stalked civil rights murderers in Mississippi and arrested jewel thieves in the Canary Islands.

They have analyzed Jimmy Hoffa's cash flow and slunk around cheap hotels for divorce-court evidence. Before juries, they have argued anti-trust cases and school desegregation, bankruptcy and mail fraud. They have snooped and have been snooped on.

Yet, for all their aggregate experience, most of the lawyers and investigators in the Senate's Watergate investigation concede that this is their first crack at the big time. With the exception of Carmine Bellino, the veteran accountant detective, none of the lawyers and investigators have been tested in cases approaching the intricate detail and high public drama of the Senate investigation stemming from the break-in at the Democratic party's headquarters at the Watergate complex here last June 17. The hearings are scheduled to open before television cameras next month.

Largest in 15 Years

At full strength, the Senate's Watergate staff may number 75 men and women—the largest staff of its kind since the Senate investigation of labor racketeering 15 years ago. It hopes to include other star sleuths besides Mr. Bellino, who helped build that bitter confrontation in the late nineteen-fifties between Robert F. Kennedy, then a Senate subcommittee lawyer, and James R. Hoffa, former president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

At this time, however, the Watergate staff consists of about 10 irregulars—including a professor, a private investigator and several lawyer-politicians. Some are Democrats and some are Republicans; some sought their new jobs and others were sought after.

In fact there are two staffs, part of an unusual political pattern for Congressional investigations. The Senate resolution that appropriated \$500,000 for a year's work stipulated that the Republicans could hire one assistant for every two the Democrats chose. The staffs will share most of their information and conduct some interviews together; in that sense, their work is bipartisan, although the political alignments remain obvious.

Critic of Mitchell

Samuel Dash, chief counsel to the Democratic majority,

was once an outspoken critic of John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General, whose name keeps popping up in the Watergate case. Terry Lenzner, Mr. Dash's assistant counsel, ended a brief term as head of the antipoverty program's Legal Services in a blaze of bitter words about the Nixon Administration.

On the Republican side, Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee picked one of his regional campaign managers, Fred D. Thompson of Nashville, to be the chief minority counsel. Mr. Thompson's first assistant is H. William Shure, a campaign lieutenant of Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut and until recently the paid, part-time manager of Senator Weicker's New Haven office.

At least at the outset, Mr. Dash is using a professional manner and his extensive public-interest credentials to submerge political tensions in the ranks. Deeply embarrassed by the leaks of hearsay evidence from supposedly secret interviews, he remains determined to make the Watergate hearings a model inquiry.

A Sweeping Review

Mr. Dash describes his assignment as "the anatomy of a Presidential election," an inquiry that will range beyond the Watergate raid, beyond criminal conduct and beyond the Republican party in a sweeping review of political ethics in the country today.

Mr. Dash, now 48 years old, is the son of an Army electronics technician. He was graduated in 1950 with Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst from Harvard Law School.

Mr. Dash served briefly as a trial lawyer with the Justice Department, then worked his way up in the District Attorney's office in Philadelphia, to be first assistant and then stand-in District Attorney in 1955 and 1956. But he was the professional chief of a political office, an administrator more than a prosecutor who, a colleague recalls, "never really stirred up controversy."

In and out of private law practice, Mr. Dash has been recognized as a lawyer's lawyer for his work in research and reform—first in a nationwide survey of electronic investigation, which produced his book, "The Eavesdroppers," in 1955, and later as a community development aide and poverty lawyer in Philadelphia. Recently, he has undertaken a wide variety of projects in criminal law for the American Bar Association.

Professor of Law

Since 1965, Mr. Dash has been a professor of law at Georgetown University here,

and director of the Georgetown Institute for Criminal Law Procedure.

Although his 1959 study turned up evidence of illegal wiretapping in big cities around the country, Mr. Dash has endorsed electronic investigation under tight court supervision. Two years ago, however, he criticized Mr. Mitchell, then the Attorney General, for planning what Mr. Dash called "a lawless system of law enforcement" when Mr. Mitchell said that wiretapping and electronic bugs did not need court authorization in national security cases. It was a legal dispute, not a partisan one, Mr. Dash observed, when he took his new job with the Senate's Watergate committee.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the North Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, hired Mr. Dash and gave him a free hand in choosing his assistants.

Charles H. Rogovin, a 42-year-old Democrat who served briefly at the start of the Nixon Administration as head of the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, is the son-in-law of Mr. Dash's former law partner in Philadelphia and will help Mr. Dash to assemble the staff. Mr. Rogovin previously served in 1966 and 1967 as assistant director of President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, and thus is widely acquainted with prosecutors and the police.

A 'Super Snooper'

Harold Lipset, a private detective who was the first man Mr. Dash hired, has been called "super snooper" and was cited in Mr. Dash's book as "the busiest eavesdropper in San Francisco." Mr. Lipset has been credited with inventing the martini-olive bug. Once, while sitting naked in a steam bath, he recorded a conversation through a device hidden in a cake of soap.

Paul Drake, leg man for Perry Mason, television's fictional hero, is "my idea of an investigator," says Mr. Lipset.

"No violence—it's all mental agility, research and hard work," he added. But Mr. Lipset has spent most of his successful career in exhausting missing-persons searches or often grubby divorce investigations, not the stuff of popular fiction.

He loves to tell the story of his successful pursuit eight years ago of a beautiful German-born woman who fled

from the staff of Shreve & Co. in San Francisco with some of the store's diamonds, valued at \$200,000. The airplane chase through five nations of Europe

ended in the Canary Islands. But the 53-year-old private detective adds wistfully, "I've only had one case like that."

He has the title of special investigator in the Watergate investigation.

Helped Indict Bonanno

Terry Falk Lenzner, 33, Mr. Dash's principal legal assistant, cut his teeth as an investigator in 1964 with the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. In 1967, he returned to his native New York and the United States Attorney's Office, where he helped indict credit-card thieves, loan sharks and Bill Bonanno, the crime syndicate heir.

But Mr. Lenzner is best known in Washington for his short, unhappy term as head of

the antipoverty program's Office of Legal Services, from the summer of 1969 until November, 1970. A casualty of the clash between law reform and politics, Mr. Lenzner commented at the time of his dismissal, "The Nixon Administration has made it clear that it will trade the right of the poor to justice for potential votes."

Most Valuable Aide

Carmine Salvatore Bellino, 57, an accountant who spent 11 years with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has earned a near-legendary reputation over the last 25 years as an investigator for several Congressional committees.

For the Hoffa investigation, he reconstructed a year of the teamster leader's activities, almost hour by hour. "Hoffa said I knew more about his life than he did," Mr. Bellino recalls, "and I did, because I had the documents."

Robert Kennedy called Mr. Bellino his most valuable aide and wrote of him in his book, "The Enemy Within." "He has the greatest knack for knowing when something is wrong, and where the error lies, that I have ever seen."

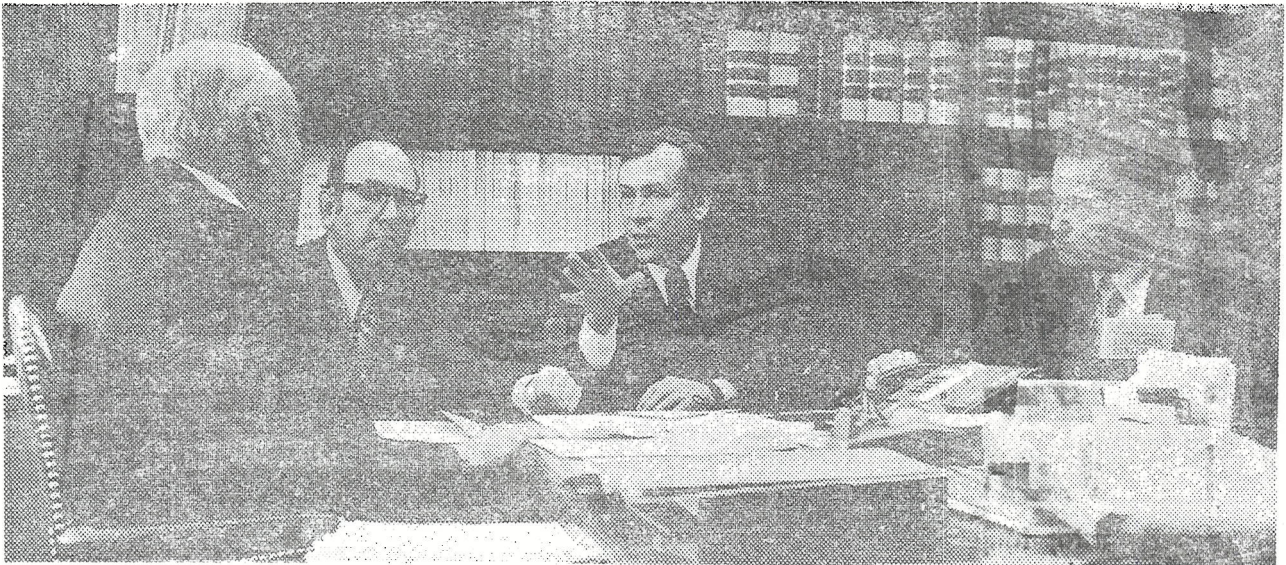
Mr. Bellino, who made a preliminary study last fall of the Nixon campaign's financing, will go to work full time for Mr. Dash this week.

James Hamilton, 34, a legal assistant to the Democratic staff, had been a trial attorney with Covington & Burling, one of Washington's most respected corporate law firms.

The Republican staff on the Watergate committee, which now consists of three men, will grow as the Democratic staff grows. But the dominant figure is likely to remain Fred Dalton Thompson, an engaging 30-year-old country lawyer who

built his reputation as a Federal prosecutor of moonshiners and conspiring sheriffs, in Tennessee.

Mr. Shure, who will be Mr.



The New York Times/George Tames

Sam J. Ervin Jr., left, chairman of the Senate committee investigating the Watergate conspiracy, with staff members. From left are Samuel Dash, chief counsel, Howard H. Baker Jr., vice chairman, and Fred D. Thompson, minority counsel.

Thompson's legal assistant, is 33. He has litigated bankruptcies and other commercial cases with the New Haven firm of Sachs, Sachs & Sachs. Senator Weicker's invitation to join the Watergate inquiry was "an opportunity to be involved

in something of national interest, an opportunity that might never come again," Mr. Shure said last week. "It's a change from finding out which car in an accident was the first one into the intersection."

The chief investigator on the Republican side is Donald G. Sanders, 42, a former supervisory agent of the F.B.I. who has been the chief counsel to the House Committee on Internal Security for the last four years.