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Conspirator Tells Of Spy Mission



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WATERGATE conspirator Howard Hunt has told a federal grand jury that he and Gordon Liddy traveled to Miami under aliases in December 1971 to set up a vast spy mission against the Democrats.

As part of the mission, Hunt, a former Central Intelligence Agency sleuth, went to the CIA's placement bureau which willingly provided him with the name of a locksmith skilled in "lockpicking" and opening "a locked room." The locksmith, Thomas Amato, said he'd rather sailboat with his family than spy for the GOP, Hunt testified.

Hunt told the grand jury that his and Liddy's main target was information on the Democratic National Convention in Miami; and especially on the role of Senator Edward Kennedy (Dem.-Mass.), who then seemed to have "a lead" among the candidates. Hunt testified that "when Kennedy . . . would in fact be a candidate" was the big question for Liddy, the flamboyant counsel for the Committee to Re-elect the President.

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BUT HUNT, traveling as "Ed Warren" and Liddy, as "George Leonard," had far more in mind than just espionage on Kennedy's place in the presidential race. They checked into Miami Beach's plush Playboy Plaza and met with Hunt's old "comrade in arms," ex-CIA agent Jack

Bauman. What Liddy, who was running the Miami venture, wanted from Bauman was no less than total "intelligence" on everything the Democrats were doing "in terms of political action," Hunt swore.

Under questioning, Hunt spelled out for the jurors Liddy's grandiose master scheme. For one thing, Liddy wanted to discover all that the Democrats were doing "against each other." He wanted to know all their "motivations," who was strong enough to "knock another man out of position" and who at any moment was "gaining ascendancy," Hunt asserted.

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FACED with this demand for nearly total knowledge of the opposition, the capable Bauman told Hunt and Liddy that "his services would come very high," Hunt testified. In fact, said Hunt, Bauman wanted payment in the form of a "trust fund (for) the future of his children."

The Playboy Plaza meeting ended with Bauman agreeing to "give the matter some consideration and (to) let us know." A few days later, as Hunt gloomily described it to the grand jury, Bauman said he "was not going to cooperate" with the master spying scheme.

In the course of his appearances before the grand jury, Hunt testified that Liddy had a White House office and pass at the very time he was plotting missions against the Democrats.