

Beyond the Howard Hunt of June 17

# The spy compulsion

By Tad Szulc

**HUNT, EVERETTE HOWARD, Jr.**, pub. relations exec., author, govt. ofcl.; b. Hamburg, N.Y., Oct. 9, 1918; s. Everette Howard and Ethel Jean (Totterdale) H.; A.B., Brown U., 1940; m. Dorothy L. Wetzel, Sept. 7, 1949; children—Lisa Tiffany, Kevan Totterdale, Howard, David. Movie script writer, editor March of Time, 1942-43, war corr. Life mag., 1943; screen writer, 1947-48; attache Am. embassy, Paris, France, 1948-49, Vienna, Austria, 1949-50, Mexico City, 1950-53; polit. officer Far East Command, Tokyo, Japan, 1954-56; 1st sec., consul Montevideo, Uruguay, 1957-60; cons. Dept. Def., 1960-65; with Dept. State, Washington, 1968-70; v.p., dir. Robert R. Mullen & Co., Washington, 1970-71; cons. to the Pres., 1971—. Served with USNR, 1940-42; to 1st Lt. USAAF, 1943-46, Guggenheim fellow, 1946. Clubs: Brown University (N.Y.C.); Army and Navy, Lakewood Country (Washington). Author 44 novels, 1942—, pseudonyms Robert Dietrich, John Baxter, Gordon Davis. Contbr. fgn. affairs and polit. journs. Home: Witches Island 11120 River Rd. Potomac MD 20854 Office: The White House, Washington, D.C.

—“Who's Who In America,” 37th Edition, 1972-73

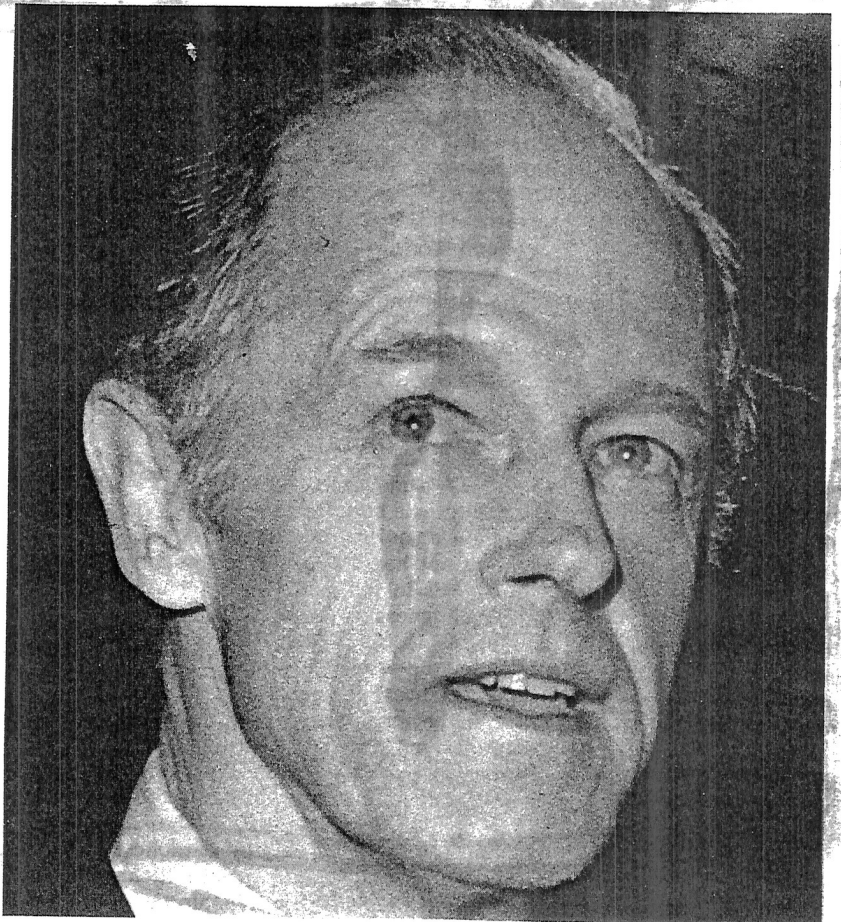
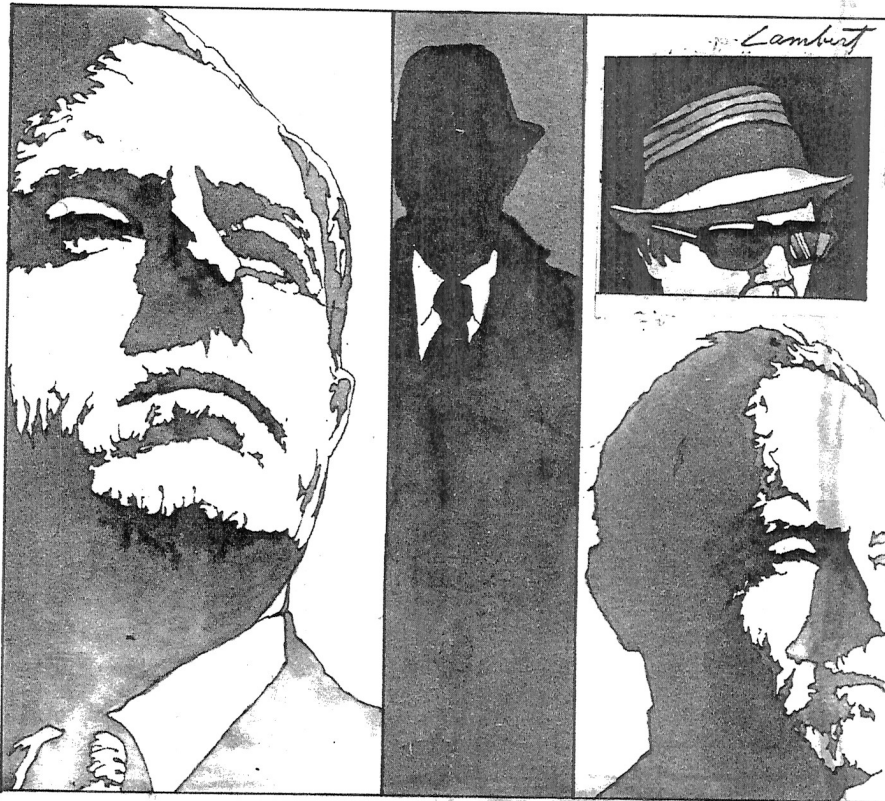
The listing in “Who's Who” must surely have been a source of pride to E. Howard Hunt Jr., a man who has spent much of his 54 years in pursuit of power, status and wealth. But today it must be read with a certain irony: Most of the State Department positions in the entry have been exposed as covers for Hunt's career as a C.I.A. agent, a background that relates in part to news that Hunt's address is no longer the White House, but 19th Street, S.E., or Cellblock Four of the grim District of Columbia jail. For his part in the Watergate break-in and bugging, he stands convicted on six counts of conspiracy, and he is serving a provisional term of 35 years.

In addition to his criminal conviction and sentencing, furthermore, he must live with the knowledge that his wife was killed recently in a plane crash while she was on a financial mission linked to the Watergate affair, and Hunt's jailers say that he has been deteriorating physically and mentally. Though he maintained a stubborn silence for nearly 11 months, he recently broke down and began to tell his story for Federal investigators, apparently hoping to have his sentence reduced so that he might return to his four children.

If Hunt found satisfaction in being a swaggering undercover agent and *bon vivant*, others had considered him something of a loser. At the Central Intelligence Agency, he was a “black operator” who never quite made it; his writing career was monumentally prolific, but never very successful—he has written 46 books under a variety of pen names as well as his own. He was a luckless businessman and an ineffectual public-rela-

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## Hunt as author: a critic's appraisal

E. Howard Hunt Jr.—a.k.a. John Baxter, Gordon Davis, Robert Dietrich, David St. John and Howard Hunt—could have had a middlingly successful career as a full-time writer, though it is doubtful that he would have made any big waves either financially or artistically. Such is the conclusion after reading some of the Hunt corpus, which now, according to "Who's Who" stands at more than 40 books. Most are out of print; mainly paperbacks, they have long since been shredded, one presumes.

Hunt began writing in the early forties, and one of his first books, "Limit of Darkness" (1944), probably stemmed from his stint as a war correspondent. "Limit of Darkness" is no "The Naked and the Dead," but it is a creditable war novel of the "I-see-it" variety so popular during the war.

One of Hunt's best novels, still in print, is called "Bimini Run" (1949) and tells of a drifter and gambler who becomes involved with a rich couple who charter a boat for marlin fishing. The situation is a little reminiscent of the film "Knife in Water," the ambience is "To Have and Have Not"

and the violent ending has the hero aware that he has been used by the wife, with whom he was half in love. Implicit is a message of distrust of the wealthy, who, like the Buchanans in "The Great Gatsby," break things and then patch them up with money.

Later in his career, Hunt turned to more commercial novels of intrigue under pseudonyms with two recurring heroes—a tough, C.P.A. named Steve Bently and a C.I.A. agent named Peter Ward, who runs with the Virginia horse set when he is not foiling his Communist opposite numbers. The Peter Ward novels are rather James Bondish for their menu and brand-name dropping ("The service plates were Revere gardoons, the crystal was an opaline much favored by the Sun King's sycophants and the settings were *Vieux Paris*.") but without Fleming's E. Phillips Oppenheim plots. Drawing upon his own C.I.A. experiences (one presumes), Hunt interlards his stories with insider's detail; the world view, however, is standard cold-war Manichean. After the carnage set in motion by his efforts to

snare a Soviet defector in "Hazardous Duty" (1966), Peter Ward reflects, "We become lawless in a struggle for the rule of law—semi-outlaws who risk their lives to put down the savagery of others."

Hunt's latest novel, "The Berlin Ending," to be published by Putnam in September (and the most circulated Xerox MS. in town since the Pentagon Papers), has as its hero a former C.I.A. agent turned architect who feels his life lacks excitement and danger. The "agency," he thinks, has "grown old and cautious. Prim. Reliant on technology far more than human beings." Caught up in a complex intrigue involving the step-daughter of the West German Foreign Minister, he begins to live again; but the book ends in sour failure, the girl once again is a betrayer who prefers ease and security to danger (a conflict that ran through "Bimini Run"). The book introduces a new kind of Communist villain, "the agent of influence," a sort of highly placed Comsymp (read "liberal"?) who manipulates his country's policies toward accommodation with the Soviet Union. One is struck by the resemblance between the Foreign Minister and Chancellor Willy Brandt. That this resemblance was intended is confirmed by Hunt himself. He sent a picture of Brandt with Leonid Brezhnev to his editor at Putnam, Ned Chase, with a scrawled comment: "Here's the dirty dog with his master." In the book, a retired C.I.A. old-timer plots dirty tricks to destroy the Brandt figure. The writing is rather flat, but the characters reflect Hunt's sense of worldly sophistication—and his bias.

And one wonders why Hunt did not always follow through on his sophisticated fantasies in real life. In one of his Peter Ward novels, Hunt describes a C.I.A. burglary operation. The burglars fit a "small device of spring steel into the door jamb to prevent a surprise opening from the outside." If Hunt's team raiding the Watergate had used such quality equipment instead of the now-famous pieces of tape (to prevent doors from locking behind them) they might never have been discovered.

—RICHARD R. LINGEMAN

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tions man, and in the end, he finally attained world notoriety and a place in history only because of his involvement in Watergate and a subsequent act of carelessness.

For chances are that if Hunt's initials and White House telephone number had not been found in the little black address book of one of the arrested Watergate raiders, the Administration's link to the break-in might never have been established and the greatest political scandal in American history might never have been discovered. From an intelligence viewpoint Hunt's failure to hide his involvement adequately was an inexcusable lapse, and Hunt's friends say that he is as mortified by this failure of professionalism as by everything else that has happened.

Along with his importance to history, though, there may be more focused reasons to ponder his life and times. For the program of political espionage and sabotage carried out by the Nixon campaign in 1972 and before was the first concerted attempt by an American Government to use domestically the clandestine intelligence techniques developed over decades of cold-war international politics, and as such it all seems very bizarre to most of the American people. But to E. Howard Hunt Jr. it all seemed very

logical and very serious, and if it would be misleading to consider him anything like a representative Government servant, his story still lends a disturbing insight to the still largely incredible tale of Watergate.

A slim, thin-lipped, sandy-haired man with a most forgettable face, Hunt is pictured by his associates and by himself—through his romantic and heavily sexual novels—as a man full of frustrated dreams and repressions and sublimations. He has been intensely loyal to men in whom he has believed, and he has held to fanatically rightist and fervently anti-Communist views. Associates also refer to his questionable judgment and psychological instability, and one talked about his "compulsion to be a spy all the time."

As important, he is a man of strange ethical standards, as he has lately revealed in discussing some of his activities during 1972. His notable tendency has been to explain his operations against the Democrats with the same mixture of patriotism and cynicism practiced by the intelligence community in its operations against foreign countries. He also believes that patriotic clandestine work in the "national security interest" can transcend common standards of legality and morality, at home as well as abroad.

If Hunt was ethically confused, President Nixon pre-

sumably added to his confusion ex post facto when he said in his May 22 statement that in 1971 he had authorized "the establishment of a special investigations unit in the White House," which included Hunt. Mr. Nixon noted that in this context distinctions must be drawn "between national-security operations and the Watergate case," a distinction that evidently eluded Hunt.

In January, on the day he pleaded guilty on all the Watergate conspiracy counts, Hunt told newsmen that "anything I may have done I did for what I believed to be in the best interest of my country."

Testifying in April before the grand jury about his involvement in the burglary of

Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, Hunt told the Federal prosecutor that "I'm not quibbling, but there's quite a difference between something that's legal and something that's clandestine." Pressed to define the Ellsberg operation, he replied, "I would simply call it an entry operation conducted under the auspices of competent authority." Discussing another project, his forging of secret State Department telegrams to create false documentation for the charge that President Kennedy had ordered the assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Hunt said that "to my knowledge [it] is not an illegal activity."

Not all C.I.A. men, of course, find that the performance of

dirty tricks in the line of duty has left them with a warped sense of right and wrong; many — those stabler than Hunt, one presumes—take it all in stride and after leaving the agency they turn to new respectable careers or quiet retirement. But it was a former C.I.A. official, now successfully engaged in private endeavors in Washington, who spoke of what he called the "Hunt syndrome" that may affect former agents who simply cannot cope with the fact that they have left Government intelligence work with all its trappings of romance and power. They may turn their skills and minds to activities in civilian life that are questionable under the law.

For example, all the exiled Cubans involved in Hunt's operations for the Republicans have past C.I.A. connections,

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and Federal and city authorities in Miami suspect that numerous Cuban-Americans once employed by the C.I.A. are now involved in everything from narcotics trafficking to extortion rackets and bombings. It was to other ex-C.I.A. men that Hunt turned in 1971 and 1972, using White House stationery for his letters, as he sought to recruit personnel for what were to be additional sabotage and provocation campaigns against the Democrats. As far as is known, most of them refused. But it was at the house of a California lawyer, a long-time C.I.A. colleague, that Hunt hid for 10 days after he fled Washington following the Watergate raiders' arrest on the night of June 17, 1972. And most notably, James W. McCord Jr., one of those arrested that night and the chief of security for the Republican National Committee in a year when that position took on special significance, is a C.I.A. veteran of 19 years' service. He too claimed in Senate hearings last month that he could pursue apparently illegal acts without qualms because he trusted in the judgment of the Attorney General, and in the information available to him. It was model intelligence-agent conduct.

The task of accurately reconstructing the life and personality of a man who has spent all his adulthood under professional covers and *noms de guerre* presents certain ob-

vious problems. The C.I.A. is naturally unwilling to discuss his service; to do so would blow the covers of agents still employed and endanger the agency's continuing *modus operandi*. Agency spokesmen have refused to go beyond saying that Hunt was a C.I.A. employe between 1949 and 1970. Many, though not all, of Hunt's former colleagues at the agency have conveniently forgotten nearly everything about him, and they would just as soon not be reminded.

There are other people, though, who will talk about him ("But don't quote me," they all say) — former employers, associates, friends and enemies. And there are other sources of insight, too: The expanding public record of his testimony before various bodies investigating the Watergate events, the manuscript of his account of the Bay of Pigs invasion (to be published, under his own name, Nov. 7 by Arlington House) and, of course, all those novels written under pseudonyms but transparently autobiographical.

"Howard tried to act out his novels and his hidden emotional drives," one friend says. "You know, he wanted to be a hero of intelligence work and a sexually irresistible male, so he drifted into a world of fantasy."

**H**UNT was born in Hamburg, N. Y., the son of a judge who at one time practiced law in Miami Beach. He visited Havana as a schoolboy (his Bay of Pigs book recounts, at some length and admiringly, how his father recovered at gunpoint money stolen by a crooked partner) and went to France for a vacation in 1939, when he was 20, developing a lifetime love affair with all things French.

He came from a middle-class background, and he was graduated from Brown University instead of the Ivy League college he would have preferred — the hero of his most autobiographical adventure novel had a graduate degree from Harvard. He volunteered for the Navy shortly before the United States entered the war. Injured in an accident at sea, he was discharged. For the next two years, he worked as a movie scriptwriter and, briefly, as a

war correspondent in the Pacific.

In 1943, he joined the Office of Strategic Services, the nearest thing to a full-fledged intelligence service the United States had at the time, even though in the O.S.S. the official predilection was for well-born young men from the Ivy League circuit. He spent some time in Orlando, Fla. (as a cover, he was given the rank of Air Corps lieutenant), training others in clandestine intelligence work. Then he was assigned to work with Chinese guerrilla bands behind Japanese lines. He served under the late Tracy S. Barnes, a legendary intelligence figure who later became chief of the C.I.A.'s clandestine operations.

For a while, Hunt was based in Kunming in southern China, and his O.S.S. unit won a Presidential citation. These were years of adventure, excitement and romance for Hunt, and they set the course for his future career.

Like so many wartime O.S.S. operatives, Hunt found himself at loose ends once the fighting was over. Because he was interested in writing, he was able to obtain a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1946; he spent a year in Mexico, reading, learning Spanish and writing.

Hunt's literary career had begun with his first novel, "East of Farewell" (1942) based on his wartime experiences. It received highly favorable reviews, but as a New York publisher who knows him said, "This was the case of a writer with great promise which was never fulfilled." Two subsequent suspense novels, "Maelstrom" and "Bimini Run," each sold around 150,000 copies in paperback editions. All three were under his own name.

In 1947, the C.I.A. was created by an act of Congress, and it was the answer to Hunt's dreams. He joined the agency early in 1949, and after a short period at Washington headquarters, he was sent to Paris for nearly two years. Now, for a cover, he called himself a State Department reserve officer.

His official job was to serve as a liaison between the American Embassy and the Economic Cooperation Administration, the first formal-

ization of the Marshall Plan. A State Department friend who remembers him from those days says that "Howard

was the blackest of the black," meaning that he was deeply involved with the C.I.A.'s clandestine operations division. In E.C.A., Hunt worked directly under Richard M. Bissell.

Bissell, who ran the Paris E.C.A. office (he is an economist), may or may not have been with the C.I.A. at the time. But years later he became the agency's Deputy Director for Plans—the "black" division — and in the early nineteen-sixties Hunt worked for him again to plan and carry out the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion.

During his Paris days, Hunt met and married Dorothy—who was the secretary of the local C.I.A. station and claimed to be a full-blooded American Indian. In 1950, Hunt was transferred for a year to Vienna, then still under four-power occupation, where the C.I.A. was extremely active building its contacts in Eastern Europe.

His 1954 novel, "A Foreign Affair," published as a paperback under the pen name John Baxter, is a largely autobiographical account of his Paris and Vienna days.

Its hero, Michael Prentice, is an idealistic, handsome and pronouncedly anti-Communist embassy attaché. He gets involved in a torrid love affair with a French countess whose Spanish husband is believed to have died in Russia as an officer with the Blue Division

that fought alongside the Nazis. Hunt's real romantic life was not quite as flamboyant, his friends say, though he had at least an intellectual interest in extramarital activities. Many years later, according to his Cuban friends, Hunt spent a whole night in a Miami motel with a pliant young lady. But, she complained, "all he did was to keep me up all night talking about his novels."

In "A Foreign Affair," Prentice spends much of his time getting intoxicated, a habit that Hunt also developed, according to many of his friends. One recalls that at a Christmas dinner in Washington in 1960, when the Bay of Pigs operation was being planned, "Howard got completely drunk and gleefully showed his false identity papers, passports and so on, which is a major breach of security." The novel also offered an excellent picture of dining and wining in France (Hunt does know his wines) along with vignettes about

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homosexual bars and every imaginable form of sexual activity. Hunt has a good ear for his own speech. His fictional heroes sound exactly like Howard Hunt, as he continuously quotes himself in his book on the Bay of Pigs.

"A Gift to Gomala," also written under the Baxter name, details a somewhat naive tale of State Department intrigue in Washington amidst an extraordinary amount of drinking and sex. Prophetically, Hunt bears

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down in this novel on The Washington Post (the paper whose investigative reporting did much to surface the Watergate scandals), describing it indignantly as an advocate of "Socialist" positions. A State Department friend recalled that in the nineteen-fifties, Hunt was an outspoken admirer of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy and, increasingly, "a right-wing nut."

His C.I.A. career took Hunt back to Mexico for nearly three years between 1950 and 1953. Between 1953 and the end of 1956, his cover position was that of political adviser to the Defense Department in Latin America, Japan, Spain and several European countries. During this period, Hunt was actively involved in the C.I.A. overthrow of the left-wing regime in Guatemala in 1954.

According to his book on Cuba, Hunt was marginally engaged during the fifties in the U-2 spy plane project: He arranged take-off and landing rights for the C.I.A. aircraft. In 1956, Hunt was back in Latin America attached to a C.I.A. station he does not mention. In December, he flew to Havana for a conference of C.I.A. mission chiefs in Latin America, his first contact with the island since high school days. In 1957 he became C.I.A. station chief in Montevideo, Uruguay. This was a comfortable time; Uruguay posed few intelligence problems, and Hunt could devote most of his time to novel-writing at his luxurious home in Carrasco. He had a Cadillac and an MG sports car.

Late in 1959, however, the C.I.A. sought to reassign him to Washington, stimulating Hunt to attempt one of his most ambitious personal coups. Distressed at the prospect of leaving his easy Montevideo life, he appealed

personally to Benito Nardone, then President of Uruguay's collegiate Government, to help him stay. President Eisenhower was due to visit Montevideo in January, 1960, as part of his South American tour, and Hunt persuaded Nardone to plead for him with Ike. Nardone did so, but Eisenhower refused to intervene. State Department officials say privately that Hunt promised Nardone's aides that he would arrange for the Uruguayan President to receive from the United States Government several helicopters of the type Eisenhower

used on his trip. There are also indications, however, that Hunt was planning at the same time to mount a coup against Nardone and had failed to inform the American Ambassador of it.

"This is when Howard really began losing touch with reality," a friend commented. Hunt himself makes no reference in his book on the Bay of Pigs to any problems concerning his transfer from Montevideo. Instead, he tells of being ordered in April, 1960, back to Washington—he says the coded telegram was signed "Bissell and Barnes"—to join the secret preparations for the Cuba invasion.

In this book—titled "Give Us This Day; A Political Testament by Howard Hunt"—he describes a secret visit to Havana to observe life under the Castro regime and mentions his recommendation to Bissell that the first step should be the Cuban Premier's assassination.

He remarks wistfully that his advice on this point was ignored. To assure himself of a better cover, Hunt "resigned" from the Foreign Service in 1960—his name no longer appears after that year in the State Department Register—and moved first to Mexico and then to Miami, posing as a writer who suddenly had come into an inheritance.

For the next 19 months, Hunt, using the code name "Eduardo," acted as the C.I.A.'s representative to the Cuban Revolutionary Council, the prospective post-Castro government in whose name the invasion brigade was being trained in Guatemala. His book suggests that he was the man who kept the whole operation from disintegrating politically as the Cubans went on quarreling among themselves. He visited the Guate-

malan bases and at one point he urged that the Cuban troops be used to quell an uprising against Guatemala's President, who had allowed the training of the exiles in his country. Hunt jetted back and forth between Miami and Washington, attending at least one White House conference. But he resigned his job as the Cubans' mentor when the Kennedy Administration insisted on including Manuel Ray, who had served briefly as Castro's Public Works Minister before fleeing to Miami, in the Cuban Council. Ray was too leftist for Hunt, who also makes bitter remarks about his fellow C.I.A. agents in his book.

After the invasion failed—Hunt squarely blames Kennedy's failure to provide American air support—Hunt served as personal assistant to C.I.A. Director Allen W. Dulles. His subsequent activities are still shrouded in mystery. In 1963, the American Ambassador in Madrid refused to accept him as the deputy chief of the local C.I.A. station—a most unusual occurrence in C.I.A.-State Department relations—because of his Uruguayan intrigues involving Eisenhower and Nardone. But Hunt appeared in Madrid for about a year between 1965 and 1966; the visit may have been a combination of leave of absence and minor clandestine work.

A C.I.A. official stationed in Madrid remembers meeting Hunt one day in the U. S. Air Force commissary there and asking him what he was doing in Spain. Hunt replied he was writing a book. The 1966-67 edition of "Who's Who" listed Hunt as a retired Government official living in Madrid. Hunt returned to Washington sometime in 1968—it is unclear where he had gone from Madrid—and purchased a brick house in suburban Potomac, Md., in the Maryland horse country. (His wife was a dedicated horsewoman.) Hunt named his property "Witches Island."

The consensus among his C.I.A. associates is that by 1968 the agency had made it clear to Hunt that he could expect no promotions—he had aspired to be a division chief—and that he would do well to start looking for a new job. However, he was allowed to serve out his 20 years in order to qualify for a full Government pension, and he spent his time in make-work tasks.

Hunt retired from the C.I.A.

on April 30, 1970. The next day, he went to work for Robert R. Mullen & Company, a public-relations firm with intimate Republican party ties. It may have been a coincidence that Robert R. Mullen, the firm's owner, served as the E.C.A.'s Information Director between 1949 and 1952, when Hunt was in Europe. But it may have been another evidence of the C.I.A.'s famous "old boy network."

The Mullen firm, located in a modern Washington office building a block from the White House and across the street from the offices of the Committee to Re-elect the President, had a variety of rich accounts, but Hunt (who first talked about buying into

the firm but could not raise \$2,000 for a down payment) was given the job of writing press releases and handling publicity for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Though he is listed as a vice president of the firm in "Who's Who," principals of Mullen say he was never more than a salaried employee.

For nearly a year, Hunt wallowed in depression and self-pity, according to those who knew him. Despite his \$20,000-a-year pension from the C.I.A. and his \$24,000 annual salary from Mullen, he was "always haggling for more money." He almost lost the job over his demand for an \$8,000 raise, which would have given him a total income of \$52,000. His wife, Dorothy, worked at the Spanish Embassy, adding to their income.

At this time, too, Hunt was an aggressive status seeker. He pressed friends to put him up for membership in Washington's prestigious Metropolitan Club. Once, a friend said, Hunt "cut dead" a Washington woman until he discovered that she attended a famous New England college.

At one point, Hunt learned that the Mullen company represented the Howard Hughes interests in Washington, and he insisted that he be allowed to work on this account. The agency refused, feeling that although a "good writer," he was ineffectual in personal contacts. When Hughes moved from the Bahamas to Nicaragua, Hunt announced that the country's strong man, General Anastasio Somoza Jr., was his "business partner"

and that he could "help out Hughes."

Hunt's friends have confirmed that Hunt had met Somoza during the Bay of Pigs operation—the invasion fleet sailed from Nicaragua—but his disastrous real estate ventures in that country were not in partnership with the General; Hunt's partner was Bernard L. Barker, one of the Watergate raiders. Barker, whom he calls "Bernie" in his Cuban book, was Hunt's assistant during the Bay of Pigs and was totally loyal to him.

Hunt turned again to Barker in 1971 to recruit him and other Cuban-Americans for the planned anti-Democratic operations. When Barker was asked on May 24 during his appearance before the Senate Select Committee why he agreed to engage in illegal acts, he replied: "Hunt represents to the Cuban people their liberation . . . I couldn't

deny [Hunt's request] on a matter of national security." He said that he and other Cuban-Americans hoped that Hunt's presence in the White House and the success of the clandestine operations would enhance the chances that the Nixon Administration would "liberate" Cuba from Premier Fidel Castro.

But before Hunt became involved in the White House "secret unit," he seemed most troubled by the fact that he was no longer in intelligence work. "He missed it something terrible," a friend said. "In a sense, he never left the C.I.A. His heart is still there."

This was Hunt's state of mind at the time he developed a friendship with Charles W. Colson, then Special Counsel to President Nixon. They had first met in 1966 at a Brown University Club function in Washington, and Hunt began to cultivate Colson intensely after Nixon entered the White House. After Hunt joined the Mullen agency, the friendship apparently deepened, though all that is known about it is that the two families occasionally spent Sundays and evenings together. This was the point at which the Watergate affair really began for Hunt.

Early in July, 1971, Colson recommended that the White House hire "my good friend" Howard Hunt as a part time \$100-a-day consultant. This

was when the White House decided, according to its subsequent statements, to set up a special operation to find the sources of widespread news leaks, most notably, how The New York Times obtained the Pentagon Papers. Hunt was also supposed to be working on a project to stem narcotics traffic.

Hunt's friends and associates recall his joy over this new assignment and his sudden sense of renewed self-importance.

He retained his job at the Mullen agency, except for mysterious absences in the latter part of 1971 and during 1972, but now he had become more aggressive in his job. Late in 1971, for example, he persuaded Julie Eisenhower, the President's daughter, to appear on an H.E.W. television spot publicizing a program for disturbed children. But when the Mullen agency decided in 1972 against using the spot on the grounds that it might be politically embarrassing during a campaign year, Hunt told his associates that Mr. Nixon had personally ordered that it be put on the air. An associate thought that  
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"Howard was lying"—he said that Hunt "is a compulsive liar and user of people"—and the spot was used only after the 1972 elections.

From July, 1971 on, Hunt led a double life between the Mullen agency and the secret White House operations known to insiders as the "Room 16 Project." The number referred to the suite of offices in the Executive Office Building where Hunt shared space with G. Gordon Liddy, his partner in the intelligence-and-sabotage operations and another convicted member of the Watergate conspiracy.

Liddy, who was general counsel of the Committee to Re-elect the President, often held secret conferences with Hunt in the latter's private office at the Mullen firm. Hunt also had an office on the third floor of the Executive Office Building. He held a "top secret" clearance.

When Hunt went to work for the White House, Colson, according to a friend, expressed satisfaction that a

link would be established between the Administration and the Howard Hughes interests. The Mullen agency had the Hughes account and Hunt, Colson seemed to believe, would be the contact between the billionaire and the White House which "could be of help to Hughes." In his Congressional testimony last month, McCord quoted Liddy as telling him that an aircraft belonging to Hughes would fly a Hunt-directed raiding team to Central America after the team cracked the safe of a Las Vegas, Nev., newspaper publisher, a venture never carried out.

The record, as it emerges from testimony, shows that Hunt and his associates immediately became involved in a whole series of intelligence and sabotage operations. They had the support of senior White House officials and, when the time came, the C.I.A. "old boy network" may have counted for something, too.

Recent testimony shows that Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., currently the Marine Corps commandant, received Hunt in July, 1971, at his C.I.A. office in Langley, Va., to discuss the assistance the agency could provide the secret White House operatives. General Cushman, then the C.I.A.'s deputy director, acted in compliance with a telephoned request from Ehrlichman. He told a Congressional committee last month that in

agreeing to provide technical aid to Hunt, he believed Ehrlichman "spoke with the authority of the President's name." It was at this meeting that Hunt asked for special cameras, tape recorders, wigs and voice-altering devices that, as it turned out, were used in the raid on the Los Angeles office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist in September, 1971, and subsequent operations.

What is not generally known, however, is that General Cushman and Hunt had known each other for well over 15 years and that they once shared an office when Cushman, as a Marine colonel, was assigned to the C.I.A. Although after five weeks the C.I.A. stopped all help to Hunt's secret enterprises "because of his un-

reasonable demands" and "questionable judgment," the old relationship may have played a role in General Cushman's initial receptivity.

Former C.I.A. director Richard Helms explained to Congressional investigators last month that he ordered aid to Hunt terminated after he requested that an unidentified woman who worked as a secretary for the C.I.A. in Paris be assigned to the secret White House operation. "It was going too far," Helms testified. But he also admitted that the C.I.A. never asked Hunt why he needed the wigs and other paraphernalia. The "old boy network," it later developed, still functioned even after General Cushman, supported by Helms, ordered late in August that all assistance to Hunt be suspended.

Sometime in September, Hunt returned to the C.I.A.'s headquarters in Langley to examine certain agency files. In October, a packet of documents concerning a 1954 security leak was delivered to Hunt at his White House office by a C.I.A. courier. In both instances, it appears, Hunt was helped by lower-ranking C.I.A. officials, presumably all friends. According to Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, the Michigan Democrat who heads the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence Operations, the Helms-Cushman decision to cut off Hunt "was not disseminated throughout the agency."

Hunt's other contacts with General Cushman are described in his book on the Bay of Pigs in a section dealing with his arrival in Washington in the spring of 1960 to join the Cuban project.

"Jake [the code name for the head of the Cuban operation] invited me to lunch at the Fort Myers Officers Club with Brig. Gen. Robert Cushman, U.S.M.C. . . . Jake told me that Bob was now military aide to Vice President Nixon," Hunt wrote.

Hunt went on: "During luncheon I reviewed for Cushman my impressions of Cuba under Castro and my principal operational recommendations, then went into specifics of my mission: form and guide the Cuban govern-

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ment-in-exile, accompany its members to a liberated Havana, and stay on as a friendly adviser until after the first post-Castro elections . . . Cushman's reaction was to tell me that the Vice President was the project's action officer within the White House, and that Nixon wanted nothing to go wrong. To that end, Cushman was responsible for clearing bottlenecks and resolving differences that might arise among State, C.I.A. and the National Security Council. He gave me his private telephone numbers and asked that I call him night or day whenever his services might be needed. I found the General's confirmation of high-level interest and good will reassuring. Unfortunately, when I was later to need them, Nixon and Cushman had been supplanted by a new Administration."

At the White House, after he was brought there by Colson, Hunt is not known to have spent time on stopping news leaks or investigating the narcotics trade, although this was the official story following disclosures that he was on the Presidential payroll. His first activity was to collect information on Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, concentrating on the Chappaquiddick incident. He flew to Rhode Island to persuade a Government employe who once had contact with the Kennedy family to provide him with 'dirt' on the Senator, and he spent long hours in the White House library reading up on Chappaquiddick.

Hunt's next known activity was to organize the break-in—"the bag job" as he called it—at the offices of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Hunt and Liddy took no part in the raid, which was conducted by a "Cuban team" led by Hunt's old friend Barker. But they brought back to Washington photographs of the doctor's files taken with a C.I.A. camera and later developed by agency technicians. The photographs showed nothing on Ellsberg, and as a result the White House asked the C.I.A. to put together Ellsberg's psychological profile. This was done in November, two months after the Los Angeles raid, although the C.I.A. claimed that it stopped helping Hunt in August. There is an additional contradiction

surrounding this episode (which in the end led to a mistrial being declared in the Ellsberg proceedings) because a senior White House official testified that the September raid was ordered because the C.I.A. profile was useless, instead of the other way around. But, of course, the C.I.A. did not do the profile until November.

Later in September, Hunt, working under Colson's orders, turned to the forgery of top-secret State Department telegrams designed to prove that President Kennedy had personally and specifically ordered the assassination of the deposed Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. The forged telegrams were intended to embarrass the Democrats in the 1972 Presidential campaign and the forgeries were deliberately shown to at least one newsman. To do the counterfeiting, Hunt, as a result of a White House request, was permitted to study the State Department file of top-secret telegrams. But the Pentagon and the C.I.A. refused him access to their files.

Starting in November, 1971, Hunt began putting together the operations against the Democrats; they were financed by Liddy's secret \$235,000 cash fund. Hunt made innumerable trips to California and Florida. His code name was "Edward" and his false identity papers were for "Ed Warren" or "Edward Hamilton." This was a throw-back to the Bay of Pigs days when he used the name "Eduardo." Hunt's first name is Everette (though he uses only the initial E), but it is a traditional intelligence practice that code names should begin with the same letter as the agent's real name.

In March, 1972, as the intelligence and sabotage operations against the Democratic party were beginning to take shape, Hunt flew to Denver to visit Mrs. Dita Beard, the former International Telephone & Telegraph lobbyist who had written a memo acknowledging that the company had offered the Republican party a large contribution in exchange for

White House help in an anti-trust case. Wearing a red wig, Hunt is said to have persuaded Mrs. Beard to state that her memo was untrue. It is not known why Hunt drew

this particular assignment.

In May, Hunt devoted all his attention to actions against the Democrats, including the first installation of bugs in the Watergate. The Cuban team, again led by Barker, was used in these operations. Hunt and Liddy received the Watergate transcripts (they also received transcripts of other illegal national security wiretaps operated by the Justice Department) and accelerated their travels in preparation for other actions. Both of them were *bon vivants*; they stayed at the best hotels and went to the best restaurants, as White House expense-account records later revealed.

On the night of June 17, 1972, Hunt sent Barker and his team back to the Watergate to place additional bugs. Hunt stayed at a motel across the street, maintaining walkie-talkie contact with his operatives. But when a guard alerted the police and the Barker team, including McCord, was arrested, Hunt quietly vanished. It was in Barker's address book that the police found Hunt's name and his White House telephone number.

During the night, Hunt went to the White House and picked up \$8,500 in cash to pay for lawyers for the arrested men and other expenses; then he drove home to Potomac. Two of his children were at home; the other two were in Paris with Mrs. Hunt on an unexplained trip. Hunt, however, seemed unworried the next day, evidently unaware of the contents of Barker's address book. But because of a tip from a friend, I asked a colleague to call Hunt at home and say, "Barker says he knows you." Hunt hung up brusquely and fled to California the following day after taking more money out of a bank safe.

After the White House apparently provided him with a lawyer, Hunt returned to Washington, but he refused to discuss his activities with either the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Federal grand jury.

Hunt's fees to his attorney, by the way, are reported to have risen to \$150,000 by April of this year. The source of this money is anybody's guess, but the General Accounting Office announced in May that Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer, Herbert W. Kalmbach, raised at least

\$210,000 last summer for distribution to "the Watergate defendants or their attorneys."

According to testimony in May before the Senate Select Committee investigating Watergate, Hunt pressed his co-defendants to keep silent and plead guilty as well. Mrs. Hunt, back from Europe, delivered large sums of cash to the other defendants for legal fees and the support of their families. McCord testified last month that both Hunt and his wife tried to persuade McCord to claim at his trial that Watergate was a C.I.A. operation.

By the time of his sentencing, though, the situation had changed. Hunt's wife had been killed in a Chicago plane crash, carrying with her \$10,000 in "Room 16" funds. And Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the U. S. District Court had remained angrily unsatisfied that the trial of the seven conspirators had revealed the true dimensions of the scandal, and he seemed inclined to deal harshly with defendants who weren't talking. A shaken Hunt rose to beg dramatically for mercy:

"For 26 years, I served my country honorably and with devotion. . . In my entire life I was never charged with a crime, much less convicted of one. Since the 17th of June, 1972, I lost my employment, then my beloved wife, both in consequence of my involvement in the Watergate affair. Today I stand before the bar of justice alone, nearly friendless, ridiculed, disgraced as a man. . . Humbly, with profound contrition, I ask now that Your Honor look beyond the Howard Hunt of last June 17 to my life as a whole. And if it please the court, to temper justice with mercy."

But the Judge was not impressed; he sentenced Hunt to 35 years, and only two months later, his dim view of Hunt's plea was vindicated. For Hunt would testify before the grand jury that well before June, 1972, he had been involved in the Ellsberg psychiatrist raid, the forging of telegrams and other activities from "Room 16." The story of his life as a whole seemed to embody the moral numbness that had become the most striking aspect of the Nixon Administration's approach to management of power. ■