

NYTimes JUL 9 1973  
**Sabotaging the G.O.P.'s Rivals:  
Story of a \$100,000 Operation**

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

The Republican party's effort to sabotage Democratic Presidential candidates in 1972 was a two-pronged operation approved by some of President Nixon's most influential aides, directed in part by White House officials, and financed with more than \$100,000 in unreported contributions to the Nixon campaign.

That is the picture painted by informed sources in an extensive inquiry by The New York Times seeking to pull together the elements of the sabotage program. The inquiry included a number of interviews with sources familiar with the program, public and private testimony by principals in the case, and information gathered by Government investigators.

The sources said that one branch of the broad program of spying and sabotage—the one involving Donald H. Segretti, a lawyer—was conceived in early 1971 and approved in ad-

This article is the first of two based on reporting by Mr. Crewdson, John Kifner, Wayne King, Jon Nordheimer, Steven V. Roberts, Agis Salpukas and Martin Waldron.

vance by H.R. Haldeman, then chief of the White House staff.

A separate sabotage campaign was managed by Jeb Stuart Magruder, deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, and received some direction from Charles W. Colson, then special counsel to the President, the sources said.

#### Scope of Activity

Together with a separate sabotage campaign, allegedly headed by Charles W. Colson, the secret operation at its height embraced a widely scattered and sometimes disorganized network of amateurs who engaged in political pranks as well as more serious, and even violent, activities.

The extent to which the sabotage effort achieved its aim of demoralizing and weakening the President's Democratic opponents is not fully known, and may never be, although it will become the subject of the Senate's Watergate hearings later this year.

However, a number of the same individuals who allegedly planned or helped to cover up the Watergate bugging were, to varying degrees, associated with the sabotage operation, and more has recently been learned of the scope of its activity and of the precise authority on which it was undertaken.

Many who worked in the undercover campaign, which was characterized by such spy-novel fillips as code names and secret mail drops, would not talk about their activities for fear of legal repercussion, and few of those who did speak would allow their names to be used. As a result, much of what took

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place remains unknown, and accounts of other events are necessarily one-sided.

But an extensive inquiry by The New York Times, together with recent testimony by principals in the case and information gathered by Government investigators, has provided an extraordinary account of an attempt by the political party in power to confuse and subvert its opposition through covert attacks.

Among the major elements that have emerged are the following:

¶Mr. Haldeman, while chief of the White House staff, approved a plan for "covert activities and intelligence" conceived by two other Presidential aides, Dwight L. Chapin and Gordon C. Strachan, and headed by a young California lawyer named Donald H. Segretti.

¶Mr. Chapin, who has recently been denying knowledge of Mr. Segretti's specific activities, in fact told the Federal Bureau of Investigation last year that he was aware that Mr. Segretti had published "false scheduling information" relating to the campaign of Senator Edmund S. Muskie, a potential violation of Federal law.

¶Mr. Colson allegedly provided some direction for the second sabotage effort, the one supervised by Mr. Magruder. This operation, on one occasion, hired a group of men, including two of the Watergate burglars, to conduct a demonstration against Dr. Daniel Ellsberg at an antiwar rally. At one point the men physically attacked Dr. Ellsberg. Mr. Colson emphatically denied that he had been involved in the incident.

¶Mr. Colson, while a special counsel to the President, allegedly provided direction for

a second sabotage effort supervised by Jeb Stuart Magruder, deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President. This operation, on one occasion, hired a group of thugs, including three of the Watergate burglars, to attack Dr. Daniel Ellsberg at an antiwar rally. Mr. Colson emphatically denied that he was involved in the incident.

¶Between June of 1971 and August of last year, when the re-election committee's operation was abandoned as "too costly," the two distinct but sometimes overlapping sabotage efforts employed more than a score of operatives working in at least seven major primary states: New Hampshire, Florida, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois and California.

¶When Mr. Segretti's cover was blown by news reports of his activities last October, the White House, fearing repercussions in the Presidential election less than a month away, began a cover-up of the sabotage operation that, by the account of one participant, included possible perjury and obstruction of justice by high Nixon Administration officials.

One key participant, who said that the planning of the sabotage effort dated from February of 1971, speculated that it was conceived by White House aides in response to the Republican party's discouraging performance in November, 1970, when, despite intensive campaigning by President Nixon, it lost 11 seats in the House of Representatives and failed to substantially reduce the Democratic majority in the Senate.

#### Fear of 'Next Time'

"I think they just decided, 'Next time it's the President—and our jobs,'" the participant said.

Such participants, other knowledgeable persons, docu-

ments and other sources of information provided the accounts of the various operations that follow.

The first White House officials to broach the need for a Republican sabotage operation were Mr. Chapin, 32 years old, a former junior advertising executive who served until February as the President's appointments secretary, and Mr. Strachan, 29, a classmate of Mr. Chapin's at the University of Southern California and a former assistant to Mr. Haldeman.

According to a memorandum written last fall by Richard A. Moore, a special counsel to President Nixon, the objective Mr. Chapin and Mr. Strachan had in mind was "to create such confusion among the primary candidates that it would be difficult for the Democratic party to come back together after the convention."

During the secret session of the Watergate grand jury on April 11, according to published excerpts of the testimony, both men took full responsibility for hiring Mr. Segretti, a mutual friend since college days, and Mr. Chapin said that he himself had authorized Herbert W. Kalmbach, then the President's personal lawyer, to pay Mr. Segretti.

#### Timing of Approval

According to the Strachan testimony, Mr. Haldeman's approval of the Segretti operation was sought and obtained only after he and Mr. Chapin had already set it in motion.

Both men also maintained that they had not given Mr. Segretti, who has been indicted for some of his activities, and specific instructions. "We wanted to set him up and get him started and not have to worry about him later," Mr. Strachan testified.

However, the White House memorandum, provided to the Watergate committee by the former Presidential counsel,



The New York Times

**Dwight L. Chapin**

One of the first to bring up idea of sabotage.



United Press International

**Donald H. Segretti**

Head of one of the sabotage operations.

John W. Dean 3d, asserts that an individual referred to as "W," whom Senate sources have identified as Mr. Haldeman, gave both men permission in advance to "go ahead and implement" their proposal.

Mr. Dean went further in his testimony before the committee, saying that Mr. Haldeman, contrary to Mr. Chapin's assertion, had also approved the financing for the operation.

Mr. Kalmbach has told the F.B.I. that he provided Mr. Segretti with between \$30,000 to \$40,000 in funds collected from anonymous Republican campaign contributors.

Besides being the earliest, the Segretti operation was the more ambitious, and at times the less professional, of the two sabotage efforts.

#### 'Wheels Within Wheels'

Its origins can be traced to June of 1971, when Capt. D. H. Segretti, then an Army lawyer still two months from discharge and described by one friend as "enamored of power, brokers, the wheels within wheels that turn events," first asked Mr. Strachan about the possibility of a job in the President's re-election campaign.

Both Mr. Strachan, then the Haldeman liaison to the re-election committee, and Mr. Chapin, who considered Mr. Segretti an "imaginative person" capable of dreaming up ideas of his own, thought him perfect to head the "black advance" program of spying and sabotage they had conceived.

Mr. Chapin's association with Mr. Segretti already reached back more than 10 years to the early nineteen-sixties, when he had headed an insurgent political group at the University of Southern California that had put Mr. Segretti forward as a candidate for the student senate.

#### Meeting in Capitol

Mr. Chapin invited his old friend to a meeting in Washington with the two men later that month at which he was offered the job of spymaster. Two weeks later he accepted it, and set out almost immediately to recruit his group of amateur political saboteurs.

Mr. Segretti turned first to other lawyers who had served with him in the Judge Advocate General's Corps in Vietnam, and at Fort Ord, Calif., where he had earned the reputation of a mildly antiwar liberal, with a "Free Huey" poster on his wall and peace symbols on his checks.

He asked one friend, Capt. Thomas Wallace, a military judge from Mississippi, if he was interested in "infiltrating" the campaign of Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama. He was not, nor were any of the other half-dozen lawyers Mr. Segretti approached, even though he assured them that the reason he preferred lawyers for such work was that he did not want to do anything illegal.

#### Muskie Staff Knew

It was through one of these contacts that members of Senator Muskie's campaign staff first learned of the Segretti operation—in the summer of 1971, more than a year before the details were made public.

Alex B. Shipley, one of the Army lawyers Mr. Segretti approached, mentioned casually to a friend in Mr. Muskie's Senate office that one of his Army buddies appeared to be setting up some sort of undercover apparatus directed against the Democratic candidates.

James Hall, the Muskie aide, asked Mr. Shipley to "lead Segretti on and find out what he was up to." Mr. Shipley did this, he said, until taking a job as an assistant state attorney general in Tennessee after his resignation.

But Mr. Hall said that, when things later began to go wrong during Mr. Muskie's campaign, "it just never occurred to us" that Mr. Segretti might be responsible.

#### A 'Negative Campaign'

The former law school classmates and other friends, including some old girl friends, whom Mr. Segretti asked to work in the sabotage operation also turned him down. It was not until, perhaps in desperation, he began to seek out young conservatives from local Republican groups around the country, explaining to them the "fun" that could be had in a "negative campaign," that he finally began to weave together the threads that would form his network of agents.

During the time he was criss-crossing the country in search of spies, Mr. Segretti was also meeting with Mr. Chapin to discuss the strategy and tactics of his operation.

One such meeting took place

on Sept. 25 in Portland, Ore., where Mr. Chapin had accompanied the President on the way to a meeting in Alaska with Emperor Hirohito of Japan.

According to the White House summary prepared by Mr. Moore, hostile demonstrations against the President were expected during his stopover in Portland, and Mr. Chapin had invited his protégé, who obtained a room at the Benson Hotel where the Presidential party was quartered, to see first-hand how logistical and crowd-control problems were handled.

#### 'Legitimate' Surveillance

At other meetings in California and Washington, D.C., Mr. Chapin urged his friend to begin by studying the Democratic candidates through "legitimate" surveillance, and suggested to him examples of harassment that could be employed against them.

By November of 1971, when Mr. Segretti, his recruiting drive well under way, was traveling to New Hampshire in anticipation of the upcoming primary election there, a second sabotage operation was being fashioned at the Pennsylvania Avenue headquarters of the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The second operation was under the nominal authority of Mr. Magruder, the deputy director of the Nixon campaign, who has described it as an attempt to gather "as much information [as possible] through sources in the opposition's committee."

Mr. Magruder assigned to Mr. Porter, the Nixon campaign's scheduling director who also knew Mr. Segretti at the university, the responsibility for recruiting intelligence operatives and for doling out cash for projects suggested from the White House across the street.

The F.B.I. is investigating the possibility that a Federal law prohibiting the distribution of unsigned or falsely attributed campaign literature in the course of their activities.

The suggestions, according

to one re-election committee official, came mainly from Mr. Colson, and they annoyed Mr. Magruder, who preferred to concentrate on the intelligence-gathering aspects of the operation.

Mr. Magruder, the official recalled, "would always say, 'That goddamn Colson, he just sits over there and dreams up this crap.'"

The projects dreamed up by Mr. Colson, the official said, ranged from banality to violence. On one occasion, for example, Mr. Porter paid \$8,000 to Richard Howard, a Colson aide, to buy 1,000 copies of "The News Twisters," a book endorsing the Administration's assertion of bias in television news reporting, in hopes of boosting it onto the best-seller lists.

Mr. Colson confirmed that he had authorized the purchase, but a spokesman for him said that it had been done "at Mr. Haldeman's insistence."

#### Payment to Liddy

The same official alleged that Mr. Colson also authorized the payment of some \$3,300 in re-election committee funds to G. Gordon Liddy, one of the seven convicted Watergate conspirators, that was used to hire a group of toughs in Miami in May, 1972, and fly them to Washington, where they physically attacked Dr. Ellsberg while he was addressing an antiwar rally on the Capitol steps.

Dr. Ellsberg, who was then under indictment in connection with the release of the Pentagon papers, was not seriously hurt.

The nine men were recruited and led by Bernard L. Barker and included Eugenio R. Martinez. Both pleaded guilty in the Watercase bugging case.

Another member of the group later told friends in Miami that, although the men were arrested on the spot by Capitol police, they were freed moments later when the officers were given a signal by a mysterious stranger in a trench coat standing nearby. The Capitol police have been unable to find any record of the arrests.

#### 'Smear Reports'

Mr. Colson categorically denied that he had been involved in the incident in any way, and added that he was "sick and tired of smear reports from unidentified sources."

"The source of the report and The New York Times had better be prepared to match up the allegations against the sworn affidavit denials that I intend to deliver to Mr. Cox [Archibald Cox, the special Watergate prosecutor] and to the Senate select committee," he said.

The re-election committee official maintained, however, that "Colson inspired that [the Ellsberg] operation."

#### 'The Dirty-Trick Expert'

"Colson was a great one for counter-demonstrations — you know, 'have four million [people] somewhere in 30 minutes,'" he said. "One of Colson's responsibilities [at the White

House] was that he was the dirty-trick expert, the counter-demonstration guy."

The same man recalled another incident, this time directed at a Republican candidate, in which he said Mr. Colson and the Nixon campaign committee had also been involved, but which Mr. Colson denies having played any part in.

Shortly before the New Hampshire primary in March, 1972, this source said Mr. Colson ordered the re-election committee to send someone to that state to contribute \$200 to the campaign of Representative Paul N. McCloskey Jr., Republican of California, a liberal Nixon opponent.

According to the official, the contribution was to be made in the name of the Gay Liberation Front, a militant homosexual organization, and a receipt for the money was to be forwarded to William Loeb, the publisher of the pro-Nixon Manchester, N. H., Union-Leader.

#### Aide Balked

Mr. Porter dispatched Roger Stone, a young aide, to New Hampshire with the money, the official said, but when the young man walked into the McCloskey headquarters he balked at identifying himself as a homosexual, and said instead that he was from the Young Socialist Alliance, a Marxist organization.

The official said that Mr. Stone made the contribution and obtained a receipt, which was forwarded to Mr. Loeb, as Mr. Colson had directed. But the Nixon campaign official said he could not recall whether Mr. Loeb had ever published an article about it.

In all, Mr. Porter told the Senate Watergate committee he had disbursed nearly \$70,000 in cash at Mr. Magruder's request, including an additional \$31,000 to Liddy for unspecified "dirty tricks" and \$4,400 for another Colson project—the purchase of a full-page advertisement in The New York Times that purported grassroots support for the mining of Haiphong Harbor.

In fact, the advertisement, part of which Mr. Colson admits he wrote, was placed not by the group of citizens who signed it but by the November Group, the Nixon campaign's advertising agency.

Mr. Porter made other payments as well—\$350 for the printing of an anti-Muskie pamphlet that one Republican official said had been prepared by Mr. Colson's "shop." Mr. Colson denies any knowledge of it.

#### Use of Viewer

Mr. Porter also paid \$300 for pickets to harass Mr. Muskie at campaign stops ("strictly a media thing," the source said) and \$50 or \$60 for a small viewing machine.

Mr. Porter said in his testimony that the viewer had been used to display the 35-millimeter slides that were regularly delivered to him by Kenneth Rietz, the Nixon campaign's youth director. They contained photographs of the Muskie



The New York Times

**Charles W. Colson**

*Allegedly provided directions for C.R.P. effort.*



The New York Times

**Jeb Stuart Magruder**

*Supervised "Sedan Chair" and other operations.*

campaign's internal correspondence, taken by a taxi driver employed as a courier between the candidate's Senate office and his campaign headquarters. The driver was paid with \$3,000 that Mr. Porter gave to Mr. Rietz.

On one occasion, Mr. Rietz delivered a copy of a memorandum by Anna Navarro, Mr. Muskie's polling expert, recommending that the Senator, as chairman of the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, hold property-tax hearings in Los Angeles as a publicity device before officially declaring his candidacy.

That way, the document suggested, Mr. Muskie could "take advantage of free TV time before it is too late." Mr. Magruder quickly ordered the memorandum retyped and mailed off to Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, the syndicated columnists, who reprinted what one Muskie aide conceded was a "very damaging document."

#### The 'Sedan Chair'

At Mr. Magruder's urging, Mr. Porter also recruited undercover agents for the re-election committee's operation, which was dubbed "Sedan Chair," a name Mr. Porter remembered from a Marine Corps exercise in which he had once taken part.

He found "Sedan Chair I," a young man from Los Angeles named Roger Greaves, through a mutual friend on the Nixon campaign staff. Mr. Greaves worked first in California, where one of his responsibilities was to recruit hostile pickets to confront Democratic candidates at speeches and rallies, and he once arranged for a dozen or so to greet Senator Muskie at a November, 1971, speech at California's Whittier College.

Unknown to Mr. Greaves, however, Mr. Segretti had chosen to attend the same rally, and he may have brushed by the "Sedan Chair" pickets as he passed through the crowd, handing out leaflets describing Mr. Muskie's position on abortion, which he believed would

be unpopular with the students there.

In response to a question possibly provoked by the leaflet, Senator Muskie conceded to his young audience that day that he was "not for abortion as a birth-control device."

After working for a short time in New Hampshire and Florida, Mr. Greaves decided that the work was "very boring and tedious," and, after having earned some \$3,800, he quit.

"Sedan Chair" lapsed for a few weeks until Mr. Magruder ordered it revived in March, 1972 and Mr. Stone was sent to find a new operative. Using the code name "Jason," Mr. Stone found in Louisville, Ky., Michael McMinoway who reportedly had done similar work in the 1967 campaign of Kentucky Gov. Louis B. Nunn and was eager to use his skills in a Presidential campaign.

As "Sedan Chair II," Mr. McMinoway, whom Mr. Magruder has inaccurately described as a "disgruntled" Humphrey worker, infiltrated the campaign organizations of Senators Muskie and Hubert H. Humphrey during the Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and California primaries, and worked his way into a security job at the Miami Beach headquarters of Senator George McGovern during the Democratic National Convention.

#### Was Paid \$6,000

According to both Mr. Porter and John D. Ehrlichman, until recently Mr. Nixon's top domestic affairs adviser, the reports Mr. McMinoway filed found their way to Mr. Strachan in his role as a White House liaison with the campaign committee. Mr. Porter said in testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee that he had paid Mr. McMinoway \$6,000 for three months' work.

In retrospect, one bizarre aspect of the Republican sabotage campaign was that officials at the re-election committee were unaware until February of 1972 that there existed a second sabotage effort aimed at achieving essentially the same results.

A few weeks earlier Mr. Se-

gretti, using the name "Don Simmons," walked into the office of Allan Walker, a Nixon campaign official in New Hampshire, and offered his help in running a "negative campaign."

Upon checking with the re-election committee in Washington, Mr. Walker was told that no one there had ever heard of Don Simmons. Nothing happened for another month, when Mr. Magruder received a second call, this time from a Nixon worker in Wisconsin who had been approached by Mr. Simmons with the same offer.

Disturbed, Mr. Magruder called Liddy, at that time counsel to the Nixon finance committee, and asked who Don Simmons was. Liddy, who had never heard of him either, called Mr. Strachan at the White House, and was promptly provided with Mr. Segretti's name and telephone number.

#### Told to Expect Call

Mr. Strachan then telephoned his friend and, according to his grand jury testimony, "told him to expect a call from Gordon Liddy" and to "answer his questions."

Mr. Segretti did receive a call, not from Liddy but from a stranger who gave his name as Ed Warren, and who said he was aware of the young man's interest in politics.

The two men met or talked by telephone several times during the next five months, with Mr. Warren sometimes providing suggestions for political activities he might undertake, or discussing the arrangement of pro-Nixon demonstrations at the Republican National Convention.

When Mr. Segretti inquired of the pipe-smoking stranger who he was and for whom he worked, he was told not to ask such questions. Mr. Warren, he later admitted, had "scared" him a bit.

It was not until a week or so after the June 17 break-in at the Watergate that Mr. Segretti, leafing through a news magazine, was stopped short by a picture of "Ed Warren." The caption identified the man as E. Howard Hunt Jr., the former White House consultant whose name had been found in an address book belonging to one of the men arrested inside the Democratic National headquarters.

#### 'If I'd Known'

"If I'd known what was going on," he later told a friend in a reference to Hunt's role in the Watergate bugging, "I wouldn't have touched that stuff with a 20-foot pole."

But Watergate was nearly a year off when Mr. Segretti, armed with his instructions from Mr. Chapin and Mr. Strachan to throw the Democratic party into utter confusion, set off in September, 1971, to enlist soldiers in his campaign of "black advance."

Tomorrow: a detailed look at how the Republican sabotage operation worked, and at the White House attempt to cover it up once it was discovered.