

# The Selling of the Watergate, Part II

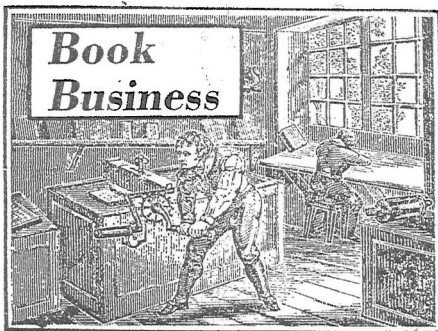
By JOYCE ILLIG

WATERGATE HAS FLOODED publishing to such a level that by next spring the list of Watergate books may be as long as the White House enemy list. Among those with books in the works are former McGovern aide Frank Mankiewicz, novelist George

V. Higgins, columnist Jack Anderson and Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward—and, as reported here last week, convicted conspirator James McCord, who's in such a hurry to get his story out that he's paying for it himself.

Mankiewicz's book was conceived over lunch, as books so often are. The former press secretary to Bobby Kennedy and member of the inner brain trust for George McGovern was talking with Herb Nagourney, president of Quadrangle, about another book idea. But the conversation was mostly about Watergate, and by the time lunch was finished Mankiewicz had agreed to write *Perfectly Clear: From Whittier to Watergate*. Author and publisher are shooting for early November publication.

Like Richard Nixon, Mankiewicz is a California boy. He was editor of the UCLA daily. His classmates were John Ehrlichman and Bob Haldeman. But, he says, "I'm not in any of Bob Haldeman's home movies." When Nixon made his first bid for



office in 1946 and ran against six-term congressman Jerry Voorhis in California, Mankiewicz became a "Nixon watcher." In 1950 when Nixon ran for the Senate against Helen Gahagan Douglas, Mankiewicz was a candidate for the state legislature on the Douglas ticket. He has a theory that California was Nixon's Spain: "The Spanish Civil War was a time when the Nazis tried out their weapons," he said. "Many of these Watergate tricks were used in the '50s and in 1962 by Nixon. And I might add by Haldeman. I mean a massive cover-up within a campaign of an illegal act is not new to Nixon and Haldeman."

IT WAS ONE NIGHT last summer, when literary agent David Obst and Dick Snyder, executive vice-president of Simon & Schuster, were having dinner, that eventually brought the Washington Post team of Woodward and Bernstein to S&S. The shock in September of seeing names, memorandums and accounts of events that only now are being revealed in testimony took Snyder into a third meeting with Woodward and Bernstein before he decided to go with a \$55,000 advance for the book.

What looked like a big price in September now appears to be the biggest bargain in town because Carl Bernstein (age 29) and Bob Woodward (age 30) may deliver the definitive book on Watergate before the end of the year. S&S has already sold some of the foreign rights in Europe and Japan for amounts of money well beyond the normal advances. Book-of-the-Month Club came in at the beginning to take the book, even before it was announced. Woodward and Bernstein should have the first draft of their book finished three months after the Senate Watergate hearings are over.

Another Watergate writer, George Higgins, plans his book along the lines of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. Higgins is the author of the novels *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* and *The Digger's Game*. He left his job as Assistant U.S. Attorney in Boston in June to write two articles and a book (for Atlantic) described as an "investigation of the investigation." When he sat down to lunch with Mike Janeway of the Atlantic Monthly in May, Higgins had no idea of getting up from the table with a Watergate package but it happened: two major articles (the first for November publication) and a book half again as long as the two articles.

"My principle focus is on whether the criminal justice system functioned the way it ought to," Higgins said in a telephone interview from his home in Hingham, Massachusetts. "This is probably one of the greatest crises for criminal justice the country's ever seen. And the question is whether the criminal justice system—the court's prosecutors and defense lawyers—are able to handle such an issue." With that premise, Higgins's book will concentrate more on what happened after the Watergate. It will examine the machinery of justice and how it worked with reference to the Common Cause suit, the DNC suit and the criminal proceedings in New York in the Vesco matter.

A potential best seller for Random House this fall is political columnist Jack Anderson's new book, *The Anderson Papers*. It will detail much of what has appeared in his columns. Anderson compares the cover-up of ITT and the cover-up of Watergate and makes a parallel every step of the way. Anderson has known Frank A. Sturgis, one of the convicted Watergate spies, for years and got him out of jail after the break-in.

JOYCE ILLIG, a journalist based in New York, has made a specialty of the book-publishing scene.