

Spying Tactics in The '68 Campaign



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THE 1968 Nixon presidential campaign employed the same spying tactics against Hubert Humphrey — and the same spy — as in 1972 when it hired a reporter to work as a GOP “plant.”

Reports of Seymour Freidin, the mysterious “Chapman’s Friend” of the Watergate case, were filed at least three times a day from the Humphrey camp in 1968, sometimes reaching the Nixon campaign plane midflight by “TWX” teletransmission.

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FREIDIN was perfectly suited for the job. While working as a newsman in Europe in the '50s and '60s, he was a valued informant for the Central Intelligence Agency.

The CIA paid him small sums for hotels, travel, meals and other purposes. In turn, Freidin came up with some resounding scoops and even handled some of the delicate negotiations toward the 1955 Geneva summit meeting between President Eisenhower and Russian leaders.

A former foreign editor for the old New York Herald Tribune and now London bureau chief for Hearst newspapers, Freidin did not tell the Hearst papers when he was hired of his CIA or campaign espionage stints.

Neither did the McGovern camp or the Humphrey forces know that he was getting \$11,000 and \$6000 respectively from the GOP while he was covering their campaigns.

While Freidin may not have been working as a full-time reporter, Murray Chotiner, a 1968 Nixon campaign official, confirmed to my associate Les Whitten that he was “working a seven-day week” for the GOP.

At least three times each day, Freidin called in his reports to Chotiner’s secretary through a special phone on her desk which was kept clear of all other calls. Chotiner immediately edited the material to correct any dictation errors, then sent the massive reports quickly by TWX radio-wire machine to campaign aide H. R. Haldeman aboard the Nixon plane.

Some of it reached the plane in mid-air, with other copies going speedily to Mr. Nixon’s campaign chief, John Mitchell, and other high campaign officials. The material was basically journalistic-type reports that provided Nixon with advance knowledge of what the newspapers would be carrying and thus gave him valuable extra time to prepare his comments.

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CHOTINER insists that neither the 1968 or 1972 activities were “spying” and said he believes the 1968 expenditures for Freidin were duly accounted for to federal authorities though not under Freidin’s name.

He pointed out that Freidin was with Humphrey for no “more than six weeks,” but was with McGovern much longer.