

'My Activities Were Wrong,'

Following are excerpts from yesterday's opening statement by Donald H. Segretti before the Senate select Watergate committee:

In 1963 I graduated from the University of Southern California. I majored in business administration. I then attended the University of California at Berkeley and graduated from its law school in 1966. My first job was as an employee of the office of the comptroller of the currency in Washington, D.C.

After my graduation from USC I maintained infrequent social contact with two college friends, Dwight Chapin and Gordon Strachan; so it did not seem unusual when I was contacted in early 1971 by these two friends about the possibility of doing some work for them after my release from active (Army) duty.

In the summer of 1971 I flew to Washington, D.C., and met with Mr. Chapin and Mr. Strachan. It was explained to me that I would be employed to perform certain political functions for the re-election of President Nixon. At that time I was aware that both men were employed at the White House.

I considered the political functions we discussed to be similar to college pranks which had occurred at USC. The impression was given to me that these so-called pranks were performed by both parties in presidential campaigns and that there was nothing improper or illegal in such traditional activities.

Subsequently, I was told to contact Mr. Herbert Kalmbach in Newport Beach, Calif., for the purpose of finalizing my employment. I met with Mr. Kalmbach in August, 1971, and was offered a salary of \$16,000.00 per annum plus expenses for my activities. Mr. Kalmbach and I did not discuss the specifics of my

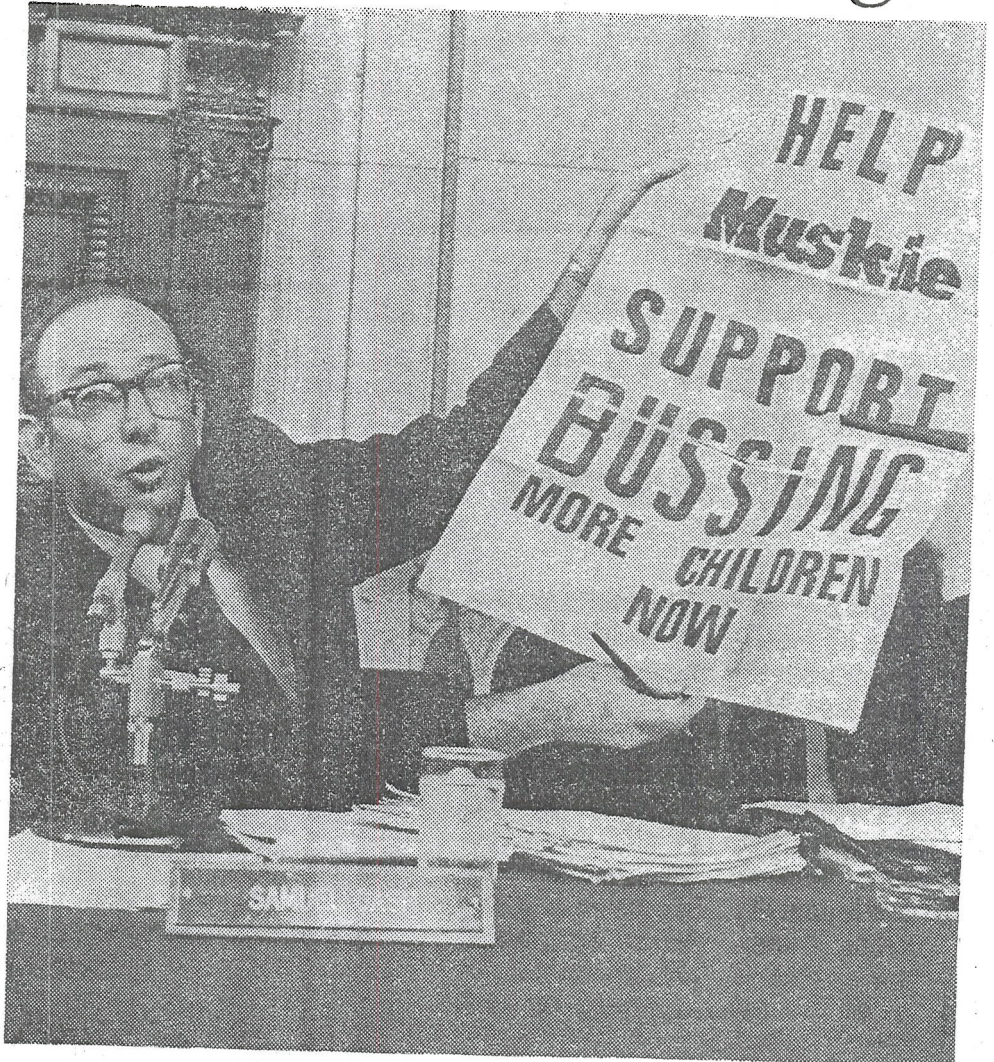
employment, and I myself had no concrete ideas as to what work I was to perform. It was not even clear to me whether or not I would be working for Mr. Kalmbach, Mr. Chapin or others. However, I was happy to accept employment from people who held prominent positions in and out of the government.

After meeting with Mr. Kalmbach I met with Mr. Chapin not far from the Western White House in

San Clemente, Calif. During this meeting, Mr. Chapin gave me a list of cities in which I was to acquire acquaintances to assist me in my future endeavors. Mr. Chapin stressed the secrecy of my duties and stated that he would be my contact at the White House. He further explained that my duties would consist of various activities tending to foster a split between the various Democratic hopefuls . . .

Even though I had at one

time been a registered Democrat and was apolitical during my Army tenure, I was in agreement with President Nixon's announced policies of ending the Vietnam war and the draft. Thus, it was on principle that I favored his re-election. It was this combination of factors: my lack of any concrete career plans, my friendship and respect for the individuals involved, my belief in the re-election of President Nixon, the opportunity of working



By Douglas Chevalier—The Washington Post

Witness Donald Segretti admits authorship of poster held by Committee counsel Samuel Dash as testimony concerning alleged "dirty tricks" campaign was heard.

Segretti Says

for the White House and the change of pace from my Army duties which led me to accept the employment.

From September, 1971 to the end of the year, I traveled to various parts of the United States attempting to line up political associates. Mr. Chapin had instructed me not to use the names of any persons at the White House or the name of any person associated with the Republican Party when making my contacts. I was also told not to use my real name so that I would never prove an embarrassment to the President or his campaign supporters.

It was therefore difficult for me to explain to people exactly what I was doing, who I was working for, or what we would be doing together. During the initial period of my employment, I myself had no specific idea as to what I was doing or how I was to do it. I did indicate to people I "recruited" that their tasks would be to picket various Democratic candidates under the guise of working for a rival Democratic candidate, to ask difficult questions at news conferences, and, if possible, get someone to work in a candidate's headquarters. The purpose of planting so-called "spies" was primarily to obtain candidates' traveling schedules to assist in the planning of picketing activities. During this period I received \$5,000 traveling expenses from Mr. Kalmbach and the sum of \$667 every two weeks as salary...

I did the following during 1971:

1. I prepared a list of questions to ask Senator Muskie when he appeared at Whittier College in Southern California. The questions were passed out among the audience, and I believe one of the questions was asked.

2. I contacted an individual in California who provided three or four persons

in San Francisco who picketed a meeting of various Democrats with signs saying, "Kennedy for President" or words to that effect.

3. I had Senator Muskie followed for two days while he was in Los Angeles, California. This was the one and only time that I ever had any candidate followed, and it was done pursuant to an earlier suggestion from Mr. Chapin that I have a familiarity with how presidential candidates traveled...

In January of 1972, I received a sum of \$5,000 from Mr. Kalmbach. This sum was paid following my request for additional monies to cover my travel expenses. On or about January 15, 1972, I received my last bi-weekly check in the sum of \$667 from a trust account apparently maintained by Mr. Kalmbach. At about this time Mr. Kalmbach explained to me that rather than receiving further monies by check he preferred that we "switch to green." On or about March 1, 1972, I received the sum of \$5,000 in cash from Mr. Kalmbach's secretary, and on or about March 23, 1972, I received the sum of \$25,000 in cash from Mr. Kalmbach. This latter payment was made upon my request for the sum of \$5,000 which I anticipated was needed to cover my traveling and salary expenses. It was my impression at the time that the extra \$20,000 was given to me so that I would not have to contact Mr. Kalmbach on a frequent basis. I now believe that the new campaign law regarding the reporting of income and disbursements, had something to do with this payment...

In December of 1971, I traveled to the state of Florida for the purpose of seeking additional contacts. During my visit I met with a Mr. Robert Benz in Tampa, Fla., and a Mr. Douglas Kelly in Miami, Fla.

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Mr. Benz and Mr. Kelly seemed knowledgeable as to the inner workings of a political campaign and expressed a willingness to assist me in my endeavors. In fact, both young men seemed to know much more about how political campaigns operated than I did. Therefore, I gave to each a modest sum and asked that they make contact with other persons who would be of future assistance. The intention was, as previously indicated, to line up pickets, recruit persons to ask hard questions at news conferences, and to obtain the travel schedules of the various Democratic candidates.

In early January, 1972, I returned to Florida. At this time Mr. Benz had obtained two students to picket the opening of Senator Jackson's headquarters in Tampa, Fla., carrying "Muskie for President" signs or words to that effect. He also recruited approximately ten persons to picket a Muskie rally with signs relating to Muskie's reluctance to consider a black American as a running mate...

In addition, Mr. Benz and I collaborated in one way or another on the following matters:

1. A letter on Senator Muskie's stationery alleging unauthorized use of government typewriters by his staff. This letter was sent to various persons whom I do not recall at this time.

2. The placing of posters stating, "Help Muskie In Bussing More Children Now." The poster bore the legend "Mothers Backing Muskie Committee." Approximately 100 to 150 such posters were distributed or posted by me.

3. The placing of stink bombs at a Muskie picnic and at the Muskie headquarters.

4. The sending of a letter on Muskie stationery accusing Senators Jackson and Humphrey of sexual improprieties. I would like to make clear that this letter was my idea and was not suggested by any other person. I assume full responsibility for its contents. Each and every allegation in the letter was untrue and without any basis in fact. It was not my desire to have anyone believe the letter, but instead it was intended to create confusion among the various candidates. It is my belief that from 20 to 40 such letters were sent out, mainly to Senator Jackson's supporters. I deeply regret that I initiated this incident and wish to apologize publicly for this stupid act. I can only hope that this apology will in some way rectify the harm done to these senators and their families...

Mr. Douglas Kelly assisted me... in placing an ad in a college newspaper stating:

"Wanted. Sincere gentleman seeks running mate. White preferred but natural sense of rhythm no obstacle. Contact E. Muskie."

He also helped me place an ad in the classified section of the Miami Sunday Sun-Reporter stating:

"Senator Muskie, would you accept a Jewish running mate?" and another ad in the same newspaper stating: "Senator Muskie. You wouldn't accept a Black or an American Indian, would you accept a Jewish running mate?"

There was also an ad that was placed in a local Cuban newspaper and on a local radio station which stated:

"Muskie believes all people have a right to choose any type of government that they want. The Cuban people are no exception and the United States should not interfere. If elected Muskie will attempt to ease the tensions between the United States and Cuba. He was born in Maine and is a good American. Vote for Ed Muskie."

We also distributed some fliers inviting the public to a nonexistent open house at Muskie's headquarters in Miami...

At this time, it is my best recollection that I paid Mr. Kelly and Mr. Benz a total of approximately \$5,500.00.

In February of 1972, a man called me, identifying himself as Ed Warren. From a prior conversation with Mr. Chapin, I had been informed that a person would call me who would give me assistance. In Miami, Fla., I met with Mr. Warren and another individual who was introduced to me as George Leonard. I now recognize Ed Warren as being Mr. E. Howard Hunt. I have been unable to identify Mr. George Leonard; however, it is my understanding that he was probably G. Gordon Liddy.

Mr. Warren provided me with the name of a printer in Miami whom I subsequently used for various purposes. I recall meeting Mr. Warren a second time in June, 1972, at the Sheraton Four Ambassadors Hotel in Miami, Fla. During this meeting Mr. Warren suggested that I put together a group of peaceful demon-

strators to picket the Doral Hotel during the Democratic Convention, at which time another group of pickets was to join in the demonstration and act in an unruly manner. It was explained to me that the bad conduct of the crowd would be blamed on Senator McGovern. It was never my intention to create, nor did I ever participate in, any kind of physical violence, and Mr. Warren's plan was something in which I did not want to get involved.

As fate would have it, the Watergate burglary preceded these plans and they were never carried out.

At this point I would like to state to the committee that at no time did I ever have any knowledge of, nor did I participate in, the Watergate burglary or any activity involving electronic surveillance . . .

On April 1, 1972, (April Fool's Day) in Milwaukee, Wis., Mr. Benz and I distributed a flier advertising a free all-you-can-eat lunch with drinks at Hubert Humphrey's headquarters. I have given the committee and the special prosecutor's office a copy of the flier. There was, of course, no such party.

Also in April of 1972, in response to a telephone call from Mr. Warren, I flew to Washington, D.C. I had Mr. Kelly meet me there. Senator Muskie was to have a fund-raising dinner at the Washington Hilton Hotel, and Mr. Kelly and I, ostensibly acting for Muskie organizers, ordered flowers, pizzas and liquor for the campaign workers. In addition, we invited certain foreign guests and provided for their delivery to the dinner by chauffeured limousine. A magician was also hired to attend the dinner and to entertain. We also made inquiries about renting an elephant, but were unable to make the necessary arrangements. The purpose of all this was to cause confusion at the Muskie dinner . . .

During 1972, I performed activities of a similar, but less extensive and significant nature, in other states. I have given a full statement to this committee's staff regarding these events. I believe my activities in these other states produced little, if any, commotion, and do not need to be elaborated on in this statement. I also feel that many innocent persons would be hurt if I were to disclose the names of all persons I contacted in my travels . . .

In July of 1972, Mr. Kelly and I made arrangements for a small plane to fly over the Democratic Convention Center with a trailer reading:

"Peace, pot, promiscuity. Vote McGovern."

This was my last political activity of the 1972 campaign.

After news stories began mentioning my name, I sought legal counsel from Mr. John W. Dean. I met Mr. Dean through Mr. Chapin and Mr. Strachan. Over a period of months Mr. Dean acted as my lawyer and I confided in him in this capacity. At Mr. Dean's request, I made a tape recording explaining my activities in 1971 and 1972 and gave it to him. I also prepared a written statement and gave it, along with many documents, to an attorney in Los Angeles, Calif., who was suggested as counsel by Mr. Dean. It is my understanding that this attorney sent to Mr. Dean copies of the material left with him and that Mr. Dean subsequently turned over said material, which were obviously intended to be confidential and part of the attorney-client privilege, to this committee. Although I feel that Mr. Dean betrayed by confidence, I do wish to state that at no time did he tell me to be anything but honest and truthful with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States attorney's office . . .

I am sure that this Committee is now aware that my activities have been blown out of all proportion by the news media. I accept the fact that most of my present problems are the direct result of my own conduct.

However, I cannot help but feel that I have been abused by rumor, character assassination, innuendo and a complete disregard for the privacy of myself, my friends and my family. I have literally had to avoid the onslaught of the media during the past year, and their attempts to get a story at all costs. I understand that under various guises, some of the news media illegally obtained my telephone, bank account and credit card records, and generally conducted their investigations without an concern for my rights.

Nevertheless, this in no way lessens my sincere belief that my activities were wrong and have no place in the American political system. To the extent my activities have harmed other persons and the political process, I have the deepest regrets.