

# The 'Watergate Hero'

There is something obscene about the fact the Frank Wills, the young nightwatchman whose diligence led to the discovery of the Watergate burglary, should be unable to find work.

Joblessness, apparently, is his reward for making it possible for us to save ourselves from incipient tyranny. History may record him as a hero, but his contemporaries let him sit there in his bachelor apartment where he lives on \$65 a week unemployment compensation. And even that is running out.

Frank Wills and his lawyer, Dorsey Evans, say Wills's accidental heroism has made him too much a political risk for potential employers to take.

There's more to it than that, of course. Wills isn't the best educated man in town, having quit school the wrong side of high school graduation. Nor is he the most outgoing, or worldly, or generally impressive.

But he is as aware as you are of his shortcomings. "I'm not a college man or anything like that," he said, "and I'm not looking for some \$40,000-a-year job." He does, however, think himself deserving of something better than the \$80 a week he was making at the Watergate, or the \$85 he earned at a subsequent job, or the unemployment he faces now.

A lot of people talk about hiring him, but somehow the promises don't quite materialize. "Everytime there's something in the press about him being out of work, we are approached by all kinds of people with all kinds of offers," Evans said.

"We got calls from Philadelphia and Los Angeles and, after an item in Jet magazine, several calls from Chicago.



Frank Wills

But none of them panned out. We contacted all the people who got in touch with us and told them we would consider their offers of work.

"But most of them were so secretive. They wouldn't give any of the details. They usually said they were representing somebody else, but they wouldn't say who, or what kind of job was being offered, or how much it paid."

A few times, it seemed relief was virtually in hand, but something always happened. A congressman said he could get Wills a job as a Capitol policeman (despite the fact that Wills has no high school diploma), but the congressman's influence, apparently turned out to be insufficient, Evans said.

He said a major labor union offered Wills an unspecified job and also wanted him to appear at their convention. Officials later cancelled the appearance, and the proffered job disappeared like so many White House tapes.

"They sent a small check with an explanation that they had decided not to make a move because 'we don't know which way the Watergate hearings are going,'" Evans said.

"That's the main problem, I believe. As long as Nixon is in power, people associate Frank with Nixon's troubles and they are afraid to touch him. Honoring Frank is just like rubbing manure in Nixon's face; business people just don't want to do it."

But Wills isn't asking to be honored, although there's no doubt in my mind he deserves to be. What he's asking for is work—honest, decently paid work. He insists there's nothing in his background to cause any employer any difficulty. He has a good work record, he says, and he's honest and conscientious. The Watergate business supports that. He's primarily interested in "some kind of detective work, or security," he says. But not for \$80 a week and no future.

Well, can't the Democratic National Committee help him find something? After all, it was the DNC offices in the Watergate complex that were being burglarized when Wills made his fateful discovery.

Evans said that, after trying unsuccessfully to contact DNC chairman Robert Strauss, he finally managed a few months ago to talk to one of his aides.

"They told me they could get Frank a letter of recommendation that could help him with a prospective employer," Evans said. "They said they could get him a plaque, too, but no job and no money. Well, so far they haven't sent either the letter or the plaque."

Maybe the Democratic National Committee doesn't suppose it owes Wills anything.

Evans, who is working without compensation in his efforts to help Wills get settled, hopes things may ease up a bit if it appears that the President will resign or be impeached.

Meanwhile, he's trying any gambit that offers any chance of success. Like the 12-page souvenir booklet, "The Watergate Hero," that Evans had printed. "The booklets cost me \$1 a piece, and I printed 5,000 of them in hopes that organizations will sell them and make a little money for themselves and a little for Frank."

That may help a little, but it still smacks a little of charity. Frank Wills needs a job. If you know where he can get one, let him know through Dorsey Evans, 1025 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 506, 20036.