

SPY SAID TO LINK CHAPIN WITH HUNT

Sources Say Segretti Told
Prosecutors Nixon Aide
Had Acted as Liaison

By JOHN M. CREWDSON
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WASHINGTON, Nov. 25—Donald H. Segretti has told Watergate prosecutors that it was Dwight L. Chapin, while President Nixon's appointments secretary, who first alerted him early in 1972 to expect a telephone call from E. Howard Hunt Jr., according to sources close to the case.

The disclosure appears to contradict a statement by Mr. Chapin, issued through the White House after Segretti's role as a political saboteur became known, in which he declared that "I do not know, have never met, seen or talked to E. Howard Hunt."

Using the alias "Edward Warren," Hunt did call Segretti in February, 1972, and from then until the Watergate break-in in June of that year suggested, during subsequent calls and visits, various covert activities that the 32-year-old lawyer might pursue.

During the time that he was in touch with Segretti, Hunt, a part-time White House consultant, was also engaged in planning and implementing the Nixon re-election organization's illegal intelligence-gathering scheme that included bugging the Democrats' Watergate offices. Hunt pleaded guilty to his role in the bugging in January.

Strachan Was Liaison

It has been disclosed previously that Gordon C. Strachan, while an aide to the former White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, acted as liaison between Segretti and G. Gordon Liddy, the Nixon campaign official also convicted for his part in the Watergate bugging.

But Segretti's assertion to the prosecutors that Mr. Chapin played the same role with respect to Hunt is believed to be the first indication that the former White House appointments secretary had any knowledge of or connection with others involved in the Watergate operation itself.

Segretti eventually pleaded guilty to three misdemeanor charges arising from his activities as a Republican undercover agent during the 1972 primary elections, and is serving a six-month sentence at the minimum-security Federal correctional facility at Lompoc, Calif.

Mr. Chapin, who was reportedly forced to resign from the White House staff in February after his role in hiring

the campaign spy became known, is a marketing executive with United Air Lines in Chicago.

Mr. Chapin, also 32, is one of the few Watergate figures who have refused to appear before the Senate committee investigating the scandal. The panel decided in September not to subpoena Mr. Chapin after he said he would invoke the Fifth Amendment in response to all questions.

During a secret grand jury appearance in April, however, Mr. Chapin reportedly testified that he had hired Segretti, a college classmate, to follow the major Democratic Presidential contenders and report to him on their movements.

But he told the Federal Bureau of Investigation in a series of interviews early in 1973 that he had never seen or possessed any of the materials distributed by Segretti, and that his friend had acted largely on his own initiative and without any specific instructions from him.

Mr. Chapin further told the inquiring agents that he was entirely unaware that Segretti had had false publications about certain candidates printed.

The 'Sex Letter'

But in his testimony before the Senate Watergate committee, Segretti said under oath that he had received close and specific directions from Mr. Chapin in several instances, and that he had, in fact, sent him copies of some of the bogus publications he was having circulated.

Among these, Segretti said, were the scurrilous letter accusing two Democratic Presidential candidates of sexual improprieties and another false document declaring that a third Democratic candidate had been hospitalized for mental illness.

Segretti recalled Mr. Chapin's telling him that the so-called "sex letter," which cost \$20 to print, had brought thousands of dollars of free publicity. He said that Mr. Chapin had "laughed for a period of time" upon learning of Segretti's false accusations about the mental health of Representative Shirley Chisholm, the Brooklyn Democrat.

Two of the charges to which Segretti pleaded guilty in September involved the letter accusing Democratic Senators Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota and Henry M. Jackson of Washington of sexual misconduct.

Segretti began serving his six-month sentence two weeks ago, and will be released in March with time off for good behavior.

The daily routine at Lompoc, about 200 miles north of Segretti's Los Angeles home, is relatively lax in comparison with that at other Federal prisons. The inmates live in barracks rather than cells, and are allowed such liberties as sleeping through breakfast if they choose.