

New CIA Link To Watergate



Jack Anderson

CIA FRONT MAN Robert Bennett, son of veteran Senator Wallace Bennett, (Rep-Utah), has conceded that he knew a White House burglary-bugging team was on the prowl in advance of the celebrated Watergate break-in.

A secret memorandum, written by his CIA case officer, states that the senator's son withheld vital information from the authorities.

In an interview with my associate Les Whitten, Bennett acknowledged he knew at least three days before the Watergate burglary that White House aide E. Howard Hunt and his second-story crew had plotted to break into the campaign headquarters of Senator George McGovern (Dem-S.D.), and bug the place.

Instead of reporting the conspiracy to the police, Bennett kept his mouth shut. He also confided to his CIA contact that he had held back information from the original Watergate prosecutors when they later questioned him about the Watergate break-in.

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THIS EPISODE is another link in the mysterious CIA involvement in Watergate. We uncovered the first piece of the puzzle as early as April 7, 1973, when we reported that the CIA had "ordered its agents not to talk to the FBI about the explosive Watergate case." Thereafter, he published several reports about the CIA and Watergate.

The CIA used Bennett's public relations firm, Mullen and Company, as a spy front. On its payroll was none other than Howard Hunt, the Watergate conspirator,

who came to the firm from the CIA and later moved over to the White House.

Bennett's nephew referred a Brigham Young University student, named Thomas Gregory, to Hunt who recruited the young man as a political spy.

But Gregory, a conscientious Mormon, became uneasy about his undercover work. He spoke to his bishop about it, who was concerned about the ethics of the job.

Then Gregory went back to Bennett and explained his misgivings. As Bennett related it, Gregory had been told by Hunt to work late one night at McGovern headquarters and leave a door open so the White House burglars could sneak in.

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GREGORY informed Bennett that Hunt was "reporting to someone higher up." Hunt's White House connections impressed young Gregory.

Bennett said he advised Gregory "to get out." The troubled student gave Bennett a letter of resignation to deliver to Hunt. Two days later, the Hunt-Liddy team broke into the Watergate.

Bennett was called in for questioning six times by the original Watergate prosecutors. He held back Gregory's vital information out of loyalty to the youth, Bennett claims.

But the prosecutors traced Bennett's long-distance telephone toll calls to Gregory. When Bennett learned this, he called the prosecutors and said: "Look, you've found Tommy. I'll tell you about Tommy."

This helped the prosecutors to break the Watergate case.