

Dirty Tricks on Political Foes



Jack Anderson

THERE SEEMS to be no end to the dirty tricks the Nixon crowd played on their political foes.

We keep uncovering new incidents that the Watergate investigators have never divulged. In recent columns, we have described political smear attempts against a dozen unsuspecting victims, ranging from the newsmen who exposed the My Lai slaughter to Senator George McGovern's finance chairman Henry Kimelman.

When Senator Ted Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) visited Honolulu, for example, White House snoops tried in vain to catch him partying. When he was photographed in Rome with a pretty girl, presidential aides planted the picture in a national scandal sheet. When AFL-CIO boss George Meany went to the hospital with a chest hernia, a special investigator for the White House was assigned to get the medical details.

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NOW OUR investigation has turned up evidence that presidential probers also inquired into the drinking habits of Speaker Carl Albert and the late commentator Chet Huntley, tried to prove Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem-Minn.) had signed a racial covenant, ran a check on the financing of Senator McGovern's home and planted a "welfare spy" in the McGovern camp.

We also established that the White House conducted additional investigations of Senators Vance Hartke (Dem-Ind.) and

Quentin Burdick (Dem-N.D.).

The White House tactic was to dig up dirt on these people and leak it to the press. A story was leaked, for example, on McGovern's real estate holdings. The White House also tried to verify the false story that Humphrey had signed a binding racial covenant on his home.

The snoop-and-smear operations were handled mainly by White House aides Charles Colson, John Dean, Jack Caulfield and Lyn Nofziger, with H. R. Haldeman pulling the strings from above. Nofziger became so proficient that leaks became known around the White House as "Nofziger Jobs."

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WHILE President Nixon himself never prescribed the tactics, he set the policy. He directed Haldeman in a series of memos and conversations to leak derogatory information against his adversaries and critics.

There are strong indications that the White House Keyhole Kops, for example, snooped into an incident at Washington's Zebra Room involving Speaker Albert. He left the Zebra Room after a number of drinks, got into a car accident and tried to hush policemen by saying he had gotten them their pay raises, witnesses said.

Haldeman later reported to the President, without going into details, that there was derogatory information available on the Speaker. The able Albert has assured us he no longer drinks.