

Watergate Heroes



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STILL HIDDEN in secret grand jury transcripts and locked prosecutors' files is the dramatic story of how the Watergate case was broken.

We have spent weeks interviewing FBI sources, government prosecutors and defense attorneys to get the details that never came out at the public hearings.

The real heroes of Watergate, we have concluded, were the FBI agents who wouldn't let the White House obstruct their investigation and the original Watergate prosecutors who painstakingly fitted the jigsaw pieces into a criminal conspiracy.

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THE THREE unsung prosecutors — Earl Silbert, Seymour Glanzer and Donald Campbell — handed the case on a silver platter to the special prosecutor and his staff of 90.

They had no way of knowing in June, 1972, that President Nixon personally had issued the order to cover up the trail of break-ins, bag jobs, forgeries, frame-ups, rough-ups and buggings, which we now know as Watergate.

The FBI agents, therefore, encountered incredible obstacles from the moment they started down the Watergate trail. The key witnesses either lied outright or withheld vital information.

As an example, the G-men for weeks couldn't identify the two chief culprits, G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, who were known to

them only as George Leonard and Ed Warren.

The notorious pair were well known, of course, inside the White House, which paid them blackmail to lay low.

Late in the morning of the Watergate arrests, Liddy sought out then-Attorney General Richard Kleindienst on the Burning Tree golf course. Thus, the Attorney General actually met one of the ringleaders whom the FBI was seeking.

On July 6, the CIA finally delivered a memo to the acting FBI director, Pat Gray, revealing that Liddy and Hunt had been furnished false identities. Yet Gray locked the memo in his safe, without breathing a word of it to his own agents.

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MEANWHILE, John Dean telephoned Gray from the White House daily to find what progress the FBI was making.

The prosecutors gave their superior, Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen, progress reports. He passed on the key developments to Dean and, sometimes, to the President himself.

Thus, the White House knew every step the prosecutors were taking and, therefore, could keep ahead of them. But the President's men did not reckon with the determination of a judge named John Sirica, the diligence of the press nor the doggedness of the prosecutors and G-men.