

WATERGATE

In the early morning of last June 17th five men were arrested trying to burglarize Democratic National Headquarters -- led by James W. McCord, security chief of the Nixon campaign. All were former CIA agents, and one . . . Eugenio Martinez . . . was an active CIA employee.

Two men were arrested soon after -- E. Howard Hunt, former FBI agent and a White House consultant until March, 1972 and G. Gordon Liddy, former CIA agent and Finance Counsel to the Nixon campaign.

All of these men have been convicted on conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping charges in a trial which . . . because of the guilty pleas of four defendants . . . shed very little new light on the facts.

But a story can be pieced together from testimony presented during the trial and some very fine investigative news reporting based largely on leaks of the comprehensive investigation conducted by the FBI.

In April of 1972, Jeb Magruder . . . Deputy Campaign Chairman of the Committee to Re-elect the President . . . appointed G. Gordon Liddy, Finance Counsel to the Campaign . . . to head a secret "Special Operations Group" for the conduct of campaign intelligence activity.

Liddy was given a budget of at least \$250,000 . . . and \$235,000 in crisp \$100 bills, which have popped up all over the country ever since.

And the conduct in which his group engaged . . . through provocateurs such as Donald Segretti, who did his best to disrupt the Democratic primary in California . . . has implications for the future of political activity in this country which go far beyond the comic-opera Watergate caper.

The activities of the "S.O.G." (as they called it) -- a term borrowed from the CIA, where these men had served . . . are simply incredible. According to press reports they include:

-- hiring operatives to infiltrate
"new left" political groups;

--planting spies in the McGovern and
Muskie campaigns and seizing confidential
campaign files;

-- bugging the Democratic National
Committee for a period of at least three weeks.

-- shadowing family members of Democratic
candidates and compiling dossiers on their
personal lives;

-- distributing forged letters on
candidates' letterheads; and

-- planting crowd agitators at both
national political conventions.

According to press reports, FBI estimates of total
spending for political espionage by both the Committee and
the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President run as
high as \$750,000.

Direct responsibility for these activities has been traced no higher than Jeb Magruder, Deputy Campaign Director. But it's hard to believe that men higher up the ladder didn't know about them.

If Americans come to believe that running for office . . . or working in a campaign . . . involves the risk of this kind of treatment . . . if politics becomes such an ugly game . . . our political process will never be the same again. Good people will refuse to run for political office or to work in campaigns. And the respect of our citizens for their elected representatives will hit an all time low.

Congressional hearings will now be held on this mess; and we must all hope that they will lead to tough legislation to prevent the spread of political espionage.

Stiff federal penalties for campaign espionage are urgently needed, with a fuller disclosure of the use of campaign funds to assure that violations are detected and an independent body is needed to enforce these new requirements . . . to replace the Justice Department which is too often captive to political considerations.

We can't afford another Watergate; and if effective action is not taken the disease of political espionage will spread.

Remarks of Senator Walter F. Mondale
ASNE

I'd like to talk a little about the Watergate mess.

James J. Kilpatrick told a story on TV the other night about going to a select preview of the movie "Last Tango in Paris." (Somehow I never get invited to this sort of thing....) as the audience got up to leave someone said, "At least it takes your mind off of the Watergate." And someone else shouted across the room, "But not for long."

Now, I haven't seen the movie. So maybe it's just that Marlon Brando's anatomy is overrated. But I suspect that Watergate, with all its implications, is weighing heavily on all our minds.

I've heard it said that Democrats are licking their chops over Watergate as an election issue in 1974. And I've heard it said that Republicans in the Congress, and in elected State and local offices, are just moving to dissociate themselves from the cover-up in order to hang on to their jobs.

I suppose there's a good deal of truth in those observations. We are politicians. We do think in

political terms. And this is and should be a political issue.

But I also believe that the Watergate scandal deeply and genuinely unites and sickens the great majority of working politicians -- Republicans and Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives -- who hold elective offices which we have won honestly and fairly. The Watergate concerns us personally. It cheapens our work; it makes it a little harder for all of us to hold our heads up in public. We want this cleaned up to preserve our self-respect. And we don't want it to happen again.

I'm sure you've seen the recent Gallup poll, in which young Americans were asked to rank career opportunities in terms of relative moral standing. "Politician" was ranked 28th ... out of a possible 29. The 29th career was used car salesman. That doesn't exactly fill me with pride.

I might add that "newspaper reporter" made it all the way up to _____. So there's some hope for you.

Watergate isn't the only recent example of corruption in public office. It isn't the only example of corrupting the electoral process. But it is certainly the most shocking and disheartening example in my memory.

And, even while the story continues to unfold ... I think it's time to **begin** to think about the broader implications of this national tragedy. It's time to sort out what the lessons should be.

I know that you will be doing just that in the weeks to come ... and I'd like to throw out some of the thoughts that have crossed my mind.

We had some faith in the System

First of all, efforts to paper the scandal over didn't work. The crime itself and the efforts to cover it up were plotted by men who believed themselves beyond and above the law because of their close association with the vast power of the Executive branch. They may even have sincerely believed that they were performing a noble mission ... to save the country from the possible pitfalls of democracy.

But above all, those involved seem to have believed that our system of justice is corruptible ... that they couldn't be caught ... that if they were caught, they couldn't be prosecuted ... that if they were prosecuted, they would receive some form of clemency.

They were wrong. The system is working. And the lion's share of the credit belongs to the American press. Nine months of tough investigative reporting, under constant political attack, have cracked the scandal wide open, and brought the slimy secrets out into the harsh light of public scrutiny.

And credit must also be given to the courts, and District Judge John Sirica ... a Republican who ^{refused} ~~referred~~ to quietly accept a sanitized prosecution of the case.

Finally, credit must be given to the Congress, for responding with bipartisan unity in demanding full disclosure. The resolution establishing a special investigative committee passed the Senate unanimously. (check)
I believe that Senator Ervin's promise of a full investigation -- supported by the Committee's Republican

membership under the leadership of Howard Baker -- had a good deal to do with the Executive's own belated efforts.

And clearly, the work of the Senate Judiciary Committee in considering the nomination of L. Patrick Gray as FBI Director played a crucial role.

Senator Kennedy

So we have learned that there is still a balance of power in American public life ... that the press, the courts and the Congress can still serve as a check on abuse by those close to power in the Executive branch.

And I think we can see ways to strengthen and preserve that balance. To restore confidence in our system we must not only guard against abuse ... we must end all suspicion that abuse may exist.

A Clearly Needed

. We need a truly independent office to investigate and prosecute election crimes ... the Justice Department is inevitably too sensitive to political considerations.

clear

Conflict of Interest - Robinson and Wall

. We need a tough federal ^{Newsman shield} law to protect the confidentiality of news sources, to assure that abuse will come to light.

Wash

And above all, we need to consider combined public-private financing of campaigns, under a system which effectively limits both the size of individual contributions and the overall amount available for a political campaign.

Because it's my guess that one big reason for Watergate was hundreds of thousands of dollars lying around the Committee to Reelect the President ... that no one had any need for.

But I think the Watergate poses questions even more fundamental and disturbing. Was this effort to subvert our own electoral process so very different from activities we have carried on all over the world for the last 25 years?

① Politicians are important. President Blamed Politics - But it was the politicians
② We are told that the seven men who actually carried out the Watergate break-in were deeply involved as CIA employees in the debacle at the Bay of Pigs.

Is this so different from the efforts of our intelligence apparatus to buy or subvert the choice of governments in Chile in 1964 and 1970, in Greece in _____,

in the Congo in _____, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere? And these isolated examples are almost certainly just the tip of the iceberg ... a few known examples of the work of the CIA's so-called Department of Plans, conducted in deepest secret with the approval of a select few at the highest levels of government.

Have all of our covert efforts -- and the expenditure of countless dollars -- to shape the governments of other countries -- in South America, Asia and Africa and elsewhere -- come home to roost?

Albert Camus tells us that, whatever excuses they may give, men are shaped by their past actions. A man becomes what he does. And -- eerily -- there are echoes of that existential philosophy in John Mitchell's statement: "Watch what we do, not what we say."

I wonder whether this country can continue to afford a "Department of Dirty Tricks" -- where efforts to shape the futures of foreign governments are conducted out of sight of the American people and the Congress ... accountable to no one unless something goes wrong, and they are discovered.

To quote a 1966 article from the New York Times,
the question is whether the U.S. Government is relying
"too much on clandestine and illegal activities, back-
alley tactics, subversion and what is known in official
circles as 'dirty tricks'?"

Hunt, Liddy et al.

I think we need to take a close look at this
secret side of our foreign policy, conducted out of
public view at the highest levels of the ~~EE~~ Executive
branch. I think we need to consider whether it is
right or wrong. And I think we need to consider
whether we have tempted the use of these same high-handed
tactics here at home.

Perhaps we should heed the words of Macbeth:
But in these cases ... we but teach ...
bloody instructions, which, being taught,
return to plague the inventor.



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