

AMERICAN SPY



MY SECRET HISTORY IN THE
CIA, WATERGATE & BEYOND

E. HOWARD
HUNT

WITH GREG AUNAPU

FOREWORD BY WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

McCord brought me up to date on his efforts to procure the bugs and other equipment—now commercially available—that had been developed originally for the CIA. Liddy added that McCord was also commissioned to buy some expensive walkie-talkies, “not like the Mickey Mouse monsters we used in L.A.!”

I learned that McCord had also been providing other services for the cause, having rented an office adjacent to Muskie headquarters in preparation to eavesdrop on their campaign. This had become a moot point now that CREEP had determined that McGovern was ordained to be the candidate.

Here, for the first time, I was also informed that the principals considered bugging the Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate building a priority. According to Liddy, his superiors had information from high-level sources that the Democrat National Committee was receiving illegal contributions from the North Vietnamese. In retrospect, these were probably Nixon’s own paranoid delusions. But at the time, we were told that the information was fairly concrete. Additionally, Miami contacts relayed a companion rumor that Fidel Castro was clandestinely funding the Democrats, as well. If either illegality could be verified, the information could prove so damaging that it would not only derail McGovern’s bid to replace Nixon, it might usher in a Democratic Armageddon and pave the way for the rapture of a majority Republican Congress.

Somewhere, we theorized, DNC books would reflect foreign contributions—and those books were most likely secreted in the files of the Democratic national chairman, Larry O’Brien, in the Watergate office building.

When John Edgar Hoover died a short time later at age seventy-seven on May 2, 1972, Liddy came to my office to tell me that another high-level request had been made of him. A “peacenik” rally featuring actors Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland, lawyer William Kunstler, and the iconic Daniel Ellsberg was planned for the Capitol steps during the time that Hoover’s body was lying in state, as the antiwar left considered the deceased FBI chief one of its main villains. Magruder and Colson apparently believed that Ellsberg planned to unfurl a North Vietnamese flag he owned, which they thought would be a great thing to steal and give to the president as a sort of war

cameras. Anything that McGovern had to say would get lost in the swirl of hippie coverage and, we hoped, outrage voters into withdrawing support for the candidate and the Democrats in general.

Usually able to compartmentalize my duties from my life, I tossed and turned all night debating the merits of another entry. To me it had no sound basis. O'Brien was in Miami, and the important files we were supposed to photograph most likely had been shipped down there with him. When I saw Liddy the following day, I expressed my concerns again.

"Barker confirms that O'Brien's in Miami. Why in hell should we tap the phone in his Washington office? If O'Brien has already taken offices in the Fontainebleau, chances are his files are with him. What's the rationale? As a friend, colleague, and fellow professional, I'm asking you to go back to Mitchell, Dean, and Magruder and reargue the case. If you want to get off the hook, tell them you're having problems with me. I've never dealt with them, so I'm an unknown entity. You can put it that I'm jumpy or truculent or however you want to describe my resistance."

But Gordon had met with his principals and said they didn't want an argument. In his book, *Will*, Liddy referred to this specifically, writing, "The purpose of the second Watergate break-in was to find out what O'Brien had of a derogatory nature about us, not for us to get something on him or the Democrats."

Much would be made of this concept, culminating in the 1991 publication of an excremental exercise of revisionist history called *Silent Coup*, whose authors, Len Colodny and Robert Gettlin, wrote that the information in question named John Dean's future wife, Maureen Biner, and her roommate as call girls working with the Democratic National Committee. Thus, the theory said, DNC would have records with "Mo's" name on them, which could be used to blackmail her, and through her, John—thus derailing his fast-rising legal-political career. Therefore, John sent an entry team into the DNC offices in the Watergate to retrieve all files with Maureen's name on them.

Even given the wild allegations, a *Washington Post* reviewer called *Silent Coup* one of "the most boring conspiracy books ever written." The *New York Times Book Review* observed that it showed "a stunning ignorance of how the Government under Mr. Nixon operated." And Sam Dash, the chief counsel for the Senate Watergate Committee, denounced it as "a fraud . . . contradicted by everything on the White House tapes and by the evidence."

Needless to say, there was no semblance of truth to this version of history. But the impact of the book on Maureen Dean, a financial consultant for Shearson-Lehman Bros., was devastating. She became seriously depressed, unable to function well in her career, and, as I recall, unable to venture forth from her house for a period of weeks or even months.

As the Deans were considering a lawsuit, my lawyer Bill Snyder and I gently reminded John of the high hurdles a "public figure" faced in winning a libel case, having by this date already gone through my ordeal with the Liberty Lobby and the JFK assassination allegations. John chivalrously replied that he didn't care how much time, effort, expense, or heartache it entailed—Maureen had stood by him during the darkest days of his life, and he was going to stand by her during hers.

My heart went out to Maureen. I was happy to be a deposition witness (and trial witness, if the case had gone to trial) for her. I testified at length about the true provenance of Watergate—that it was a political intelligence-gathering operation from start to finish, very possibly ordered personally by the president himself.

The authors and the publisher of *Silent Coup* crumbled—settling with John and Maureen. Gordon Liddy, who had trumpeted the false version of Watergate on his radio program, said that he would never settle and demanded a full trial in federal court. In the end, he did cave—but only after the Deans had spent thousands of dollars to secure some justice. Libel defendants often ask that the terms of the settlement be sealed by the court—to protect the guilty. The terms of these settlements were all sealed, so I'll never know the particulars. I only hope and trust that the Deans made a boatload of money.

When a reporter asked about the financial rewards of the settlement, Dean said that he was limited to two words, "We're satisfied."

Maureen eventually wrote her own memoir, *Mo: A Woman's View of Watergate*, and two novels, *Washington Wives* and *Capitol Secrets*.

So as far as Liddy's and Ehrlichman's quotes go, saying that the second break-in was in response to some dirty Republican linen that the DNC was holding, no one mentioned it to me at the time, and the Cubans who would have been tasked with finding it were not briefed, so the break-in would not have succeeded in that purpose.

On Friday, June 16, I met Thomas Gregory in the lobby of the Roger

offices. As we conv
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the plan. But Tom lo

"You didn't get it

"What note?" I s

"I gave Bob Benn

this morning."

"What was in the

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Gregory's hand.

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task. Even he gritted his