

America: Attack From within



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SAN FRANCISCO — The American people may never know the complete story of the politically-explosive Watergate incident.

Seven men have now been indicted in connection with the raid on the Democratic Party headquarters in June, but investigation of their other activities has been hampered by the political nature of the offences.

The men — two of them officially connected to the Nixon administration — may be operatives for a conspiracy by elements in the White House, the Central Intelligence Agency, and a Cuban exile group based in Miami.

The Watergate raid was reported as only one of a series of politically inspired enterprises conducted by the group.

Open to speculation is whether those other activities included the planning of a political coup, as outlined in statements last year by Los Angeles agent provocateur, Louis Tackwood.

At least one "conspiracy investigator", Mae Brussel, believes in this possibility, and has openly stated that conviction.

Four of the men were planning demonstrations at the Republican party convention in August, similar to those described by Tackwood which, if they were successful, would have resulted in a military regime assuming power in the United States.

The possibilities and consequences of such an operation can only be gauged from a study of related events which preceded the Watergate incident.

GOVERNMENT AGENTS INCITE DISSENT

For some years the United States government has followed a policy of inciting dissent against itself.

Many of the charges levelled by the government against militant radical organizations are the result of incidents planned and executed by an agency of the government itself.

"The government's theory," says New York Civil Liberties Union counsel Eve Cary, "is that if an individual or individuals want to commit a crime, they are as guilty as if they had committed it."

"If the government agent does not provide them with the means of acting on their desires, they will find some other means of carrying them out."

"Therefore, the agent is justified in provoking them into action. Provocation is a means of catching enemies before they become dangerous."

One of the latest examples is the Berrigan case, in which the late FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, revealed "a plot to kidnap a high government official", Henry Kissinger. The Harrisburg Seven were acquitted on the charge but two of the defendants, Father Philip Berrigan and Sister Elizabeth McAlister, were convicted on seven counts of smuggling and attempting to smuggle letters out of a federal prison.

The defense charged that the smuggling of letters was a minor offense which usually merits no penalty at all, and that the "real offender" in the case was Boyd F. Douglas Jr., the FBI agent informer who actually carried the letters in and out of Lewisburg prison. The charge was eventually dismissed on the application of the prosecution but not until the two had been sentenced to actual jail terms.

For this court case, similar to many others, the public paid between \$1 and \$3 million in governmental public relations. Without any judicial decision, the long trial associated the defendants with violence, thereby justifying increased repression, says Eve Cary.

Over the past year, four agent provocateurs have admitted they were hired by the FBI or local police to help plan and execute terrorist acts.

A former student of the University of Alabama, Charles Grimm, alleges it was an FBI agent who instructed him to burn buildings and throw fire bombs. David Sannes of Seattle, says an FBI agent issued him instructions to destroy the Evergreen Point floating bridge with five radical accomplices, and to "ensure that the individual who set the bomb died in the booby-trapped explosion". Jeff Desmond claims an FBI agent supplied him with money to purchase fuses and blasting caps to demonstrate to a group of radicals how to manufacture bombs.

The fourth man was Louis Tackwood, a Los Angeles police department agent who announced just less than a year ago that police planned to provoke violence at this year's political conventions, which were originally scheduled for San Diego.

According to Tackwood, the plan was initiated six months before when a group of "high-ranking police officers came up with a plan that would be a final solution to all militant problems in America".

1972 ELECTIONS CANCELLED

Twelve months earlier it was reported that the Rand Corporation "Think tank" had been commissioned to conduct a "feasibility study" on cancellation of the 1972 elections.

The story was first uncovered by a Washington correspondent for the Newhouse newspaper chain, William Howard, who claimed he learned this from the wife of a Rand corporation executive.

Reason given by presidential advisors for the study to Rand was increasing concern "about the country's internal security and the chances of radical elements disrupting government operations, including national elections".

The Rand study would "envision a situation where rebellious factions using force or bomb threats would make it unsafe to conduct an election, and to provide the president with a plan of action."

The Wall Street Journal also recorded the report, and Los Angeles Free Press reporters were told by Rand employees that they "had done a good and right thing in publishing the story".

NIXON WOULD INCITE RIOT

Louis Tackwood's history is as interesting as his allegations, suggesting an unreal life adaptation of the television series "To Catch a Thief".

In 1962 he was arrested as a member of a car theft ring, and offered a nominal sentence if he agreed to work with police to break a larger car theft ring. Tackwood's police record contains several entries for which the penalties are regarded as inordinately light.

Notations accompanying the police record describe Tackwood as a valuable informer, and it was in this role that he commenced political work with the Los Angeles Police Department Criminal Conspiracy Section (CCS). Tackwood's description of his infiltration and activities within the Black Panther Party has been described as "consistent, detailed and concrete".

"I am not politically right or left," said Tackwood. "It's not a thing where I feel I am obligated right or left. It is a time when political right and left (should demand) that the police department of Los Angeles stop being provocateurs. I feel once this atmosphere is cleared up, the Black man and the Chicano can clean up their own houses."

The recording of Tackwood's evidence by the Citizens Research and Investigating Committee took almost three months, and during that time, Tackwood continued to work for CCS under a cover story given to his superiors that he was spying on the organization.

According to journalist Michael Blake, who originally discovered the story: "Boundless information on the activities of the police lay firmly in the informer's brain, information that most radical activists would have given years of their lives to know."

"It was not to be known without a price however, and that price turned out to be the agony of working with and through a man like Louis Tackwood."

Tackwood's most frightening information was his conviction that he was slated for membership in a special team — Squad 19 — assigned to creating a national emergency at the Republican convention in San Diego.

Tackwood said the plan entailed the planting and detonation of bombs during the convention in conjunction with an agent-provoked riot outside, to create a state of national emergency so mass arrests and detention of political activists could take place.

The explosions would be designed "to kill a number of delegates, creating a nation-wide hysteria that would then provide President Nixon with the popular support necessary to declare a state of national emergency."

"Richard Nixon would order the arrest of all militants and left-wing revolutionaries and cancel the 1972 elections. He could invoke special emergency powers leading to the detention of political activists. Martial law would be achieved."

The Washington Post published the story on its front page, and it appeared in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times. But otherwise it appeared that a news blackout applied.

According to the Chicago Journalism Review of July this year: "The stories were transmitted around the communes and street ghettos of the Woodstock Nation via Alternate Press Service and College Press Service, which acted truer to the tenets of good journalism than had the more established services."

When CPS Washington correspondent Carl Nelson contacted the FBI and asked for any statement on the Tackwood allegations, officials claimed no knowledge of the affair and asked Nelson if he was "drunk or tripping".

The FBI reaction is strange when one considers that Nelson is the son of the fourth highest official in the FBI. The Bureau issued an unusual non-committal statement less than one hour later. That statement read (emphasis added):

"The allegations of Tackwood are completely false as far as the FBI is concerned. The charges were publicly refuted by Tackwood himself on Oct. 6 in the office of the Los Angeles district attorney with a Los Angeles Times reporter present."

(It is necessary to identify that reporter as Jerry Cohen, who was trusted with two other reporters to secret press conferences with Tackwood, and then arranged a police raid. He was relieved from the story by the Times, which last reported that he was on extended leave of absence and was not available.)

Tackwood's allegations are similar to the operation planned by the characters arrested in the Watergate affair — only the location differs.

"When the convention was moved to Miami, a whole new group of street people would have to set the milieu for confrontations," says Mae Brussel, the self-styled conspiracy investigator. "Some persons could be imported. Local varieties would be better. The radical, emotional, well-trained, constantly-provoked Cuban exile community could be worked up sufficiently..."

If there was a conspiracy to induce a state of emergency at the Republican convention in Miami, it failed when the organizers were arrested at Watergate.

But, Mae adds, "the significance of the Watergate affair is that every element necessary for a political coup d'etat in the United States was assembled at the time of their arrest."

"The team of men represented at the hotel went all the way from the White House with its Emergency Contingency Unit, walkie-talkies and private radio frequency, to the paid street provocateurs and troops who would execute the emergencies."

The Watergate raid of June 17 was discovered when an obviously uninformed security guard at the building found a piece of tape holding open door-locks.

The men arrested at the scene were James McCord, Bernard Baker, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez, and Virgilio Gonzales. Howard Hunt and George Liddy were charged later. All seven had CIA connections if not experience, and all had worked with the Cuban "ex-patriots" who mounted the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion on the Caribbean Island in 1961.

James McCord had served in both the FBI and the CIA, and also served with a 16-man unit attached to the White House and specializing in "emergencies, radicals and contingency plans" in event of war. He was chief of security for "Fairfax Highway Research Station", a CIA outfit in Langley, Virginia from 1961 to 1970, and was salaried security co-ordinator for the Committee to Re-Elect Richard Nixon until arrested.

Howard Hunt worked in the CIA for 21 years, and later shared offices with Robert Bennet and Douglas Caddy, co-founders of the radical right-wing Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). Caddy has been found in contempt of court for refusing to answer a series of grand jury questions about the raid.

Hunt originally set up the Watergate team in 1971, but at that time his only task was to prevent leaks from the White House to newspapers, aided by George Liddy. Late last year, the two turned their attentions to the gathering of intelligence for use against the Democrats in this year's campaign.

McCord joined the Committee for the Re-election of the President in October 1971, followed by Liddy in December. Hunt then recruited Barker, who brought with him the team of Martinez, Sturgis and Gonzales. The Watergate team was complete.

The operation was evidently financed (at least superficially) by the Committee for the Re-election of the President, which paid Barker \$114,000 in five cheques drawn on a Mexican bank to preserve their anonymity.

It is the payments made to the CRP, the sources of the money, and the date on which the CRP received the funds which has dictated most of the space in mass media reports on the Watergate raid.

MARTHA MITCHELL FED-UP

Four days after the raid, Martha Mitchell, wife of the former Attorney General who at that time headed Nixon's re-election committee, called UPI reporter Helen Thomas by phone from Newport, California.

"I am a political prisoner," she said. "I know dirty things, I saw dirty things and I gave John an ultimatum I would leave him if he didn't get out. I am not going to stand for all those dirty tricks that go on."

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