The Spectacle of the False Flag
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‘Conspiratorial play is a universal of power politics, and where there is no limit to power, there is no limit to conspiracy.’
—Carl Oglesby

‘I don’t have—I can’t conceive of what that caper was all about, I really can’t conceive it.’—Richard Helms

That compendium of parapolitical occurrences conventionally known as ‘The Watergate Scandal’ is complete simulacrum. The ‘third rate burglary attempt’ was actually a fiction; that is, a parapolitical ‘comedy of errors’, which, just like JFK/DALLAS and LBJ/TONKIN, signifies precisely nothing, revealing itself as a perfect spectacle. Although generally understood in the popular consciousness as an autonomous event, I will show that Watergate (or, following clandestine parlance once again, NIXON/WATERGATE) in fact forms part of a parapolitical continuum, incorporating a series of doubled events governed by the covert application of spectacular power. Just as Johnson effectively swapped Vietnam for Cuba, so did Nixon (a covert Yan-
kee masquerading as a Cowboy) swap Vietnam for Detente II—the second, and vastly more successful exercise in triangulated multilateralism first attempted by JFK and which provoked an analogous clandestine response.

It is not widely known that the grandest historical ambition of the Nixon administration was the cessation of Civil War II and the re-unification of the warring elites through an all-inclusive neo-Cowboy realignment of the national political culture: ‘The New American Majority’. As History would have it, however, that (para-) political honor was to be reserved for Ronald Reagan; it was on the Gipper’s watch, and not Tricky Dick’s, that the U.S. was launched upon its unalterable trajectory towards the ‘suicidal’ State of Pure War. But upon ascending the Presidency in 1969, Nixon’s more immediate—and indispensable—task was the final resolution of the dilemma of Vietnam. 1968, the year of the Tet Offensive, Johnson’s decision to not seek re-election, and the riots of the Chicago Convention, marked the moment of the de facto U.S. decision to withdraw from Indochina, driven by the war induced systemic crisis within the Capitalist World-Economy; specifically, the U.S.-based gold-outflow crisis and the structural entrenchment of the global inflationary spiral. ‘The larger economic system of the Western world as a whole was suffering from another great malaise which in some way or another was connected to the Vietnam War.’ The American war in Southeast Asia, and ‘the mounting inflation that ensued, undermined the international system built up since 1947, and in particular weakened the posi-

1 Haldeman, 323.
2 See Wilson, ‘Speed/Pure War/Power Crime’ generally.
3 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy War, 159.
tion of the United States, the linchpin of the system...⁴ [so that after 1967] the rules and institutional bases of the old structure began to disintegrate.⁵ The political challenge was to devise a way of withdrawing from Vietnam in such a manner that the U.S. centric nature of global ‘rules and institutional bases’ could be maintained. In order to accomplish this, given the pronounced shift towards the Cowboy faction under Johnson, it was necessary for Nixon to successfully play a complex game of dual representations on two different levels simultaneously. Firstly, President, Nixon’s impeccable Cowboy credentials (‘Only Nixon can go to China’), signified primarily by his open animosity against the Yankee ‘Eastern Establishment,’ was deployed as the camouflage for a covert quasi-Yankee agenda of withdrawal from the Pacific and a (relative) shift backwards towards Atlanticism. Secondly, Nixon deployed as his surrogate double his decidedly Yankee National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger⁶ to implement Détente I while covertly hidden behind the cut-out of the ‘official’ Secretary of State William Rogers.

Both Nixon and Kissinger saw the government bureaucrats as roadblocks to be circumvented. To Nixon, Congress was under the thumbs of the Democrats; the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency were havens for the Eastern Establishment liberals who hated him; and the military [the JCS] was full of doctrinaire, inflexible anti-communists. To circumvent them all, Nixon determined to use an agency first estab-

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⁴ Geoffrey Barraclough, cited in ibid, 161.
⁵ C. Fred Bergsten, cited in ibid, 161.
⁶ ‘Kissinger had no background in Chinese affairs; his interests lay in European and Soviet relations.’ Haldeman, 91. In Kissinger’s own words: ‘I am not interested in anything south of the Pyrenees.’
lished in 1947 that had lain dormant in the Kennedy and Johnson years but was under the complete control of the White House—the National Security Council. For a man who loved secrecy, it was perfect. While the statutory members of the NSC were officers of the cabinet, the national security adviser and his staff were presidential appointees who did not have to be confirmed by Congress. The NSC was chartered as a clearinghouse for information from State, the Pentagon, and the intelligence community flowing to the White House, and it could take action quickly.  

Nixon’s much touted ‘Secret Plan’ for ‘ending’ (= ‘winning’) the war in Vietnam was nothing more than an extraordinarily byzantine ‘exit strategy’, governed by the parallel considerations of the gold-flow crisis and the necessity of securing détente with both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, the two primary sponsors of North Vietnam. Pivotal to the secret plan was the successful negotiation of a series of triangulated set(s) of accords: the comparative ‘loss’ of Vietnam would not constitute an absolute loss within the binary logic (zero-sum game) of the Cold War if Détente II could be realized; simultaneously, the presentation of détente as a multilateralist fait accompli would domestically undercut both the military and ideological opposition to the exit strategy. The carefully orchestrated exit, of course, would require the following: (i) a carefully phased withdrawal from Vietnam, accompanied by a frenzied intensification of the war effort (the bombing of Hanoi) and the infliction of the maximum degree of destruction upon the physical infrastructure of Vietnam, reaching its apogee in the secret bombing of both Laos

7 Colodny and Gettlin, 6-7.
and Cambodia;⁸ (ii) the U.S. securing the ‘normalization’ of relations with China (most importantly for the investment opportunities this represented, a central component of the Cowboy Asia-First strategy and the Nixon affiliated ‘China Lobby’) along with a new era of stabilization with the USSR (consistent with the Atlanticist orientation of the Yankee faction), and; (iii) deploying Détente II as the foundation for a new neo-Yankee foreign policy consensus by making irreversible a post-Vietnam geo-strategic shift away from the Asia-Pacific back towards a new North Atlantic-European coalition. However, in order to physically implement the ‘Secret Plan’, the indispensable key to success was the successful creation and operation of a ‘private’, ‘secret’, or ‘para-government’ within the White House itself as a means of obviating both the Yankee and Cowboy elites. And this, in turn, made necessary a series of unprecedented covert actions by the Chief Executive himself.

This grandly parapolitical interpretation of the Nixon administration renders far more intelligible an important but generally under-appreciated event of Nixon’s tenure: the failure to implement what is known as Huston Plan. Formulated in 1970 and named after a junior White House staffer (Tom Charles Huston), the plan was an attempt to amalgamate the domestic counter-intelligence programs of all the major intelligence agencies (CIA, DIA, NSA, FBI) into a single elite committee in order to provide Nixon ‘with one informed body of opinion on

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⁸ This constitutes another, if generally overlooked, form of linkage between Vietnam and Cuba: the bombing campaign against Hanoi and the open-ended trade embargo against Havana were both intended to inflict so much economic and physical hardship as to render their respective systems of Marxist-Leninism unviable as models for regional development.
domestic political intelligence.’ Also underappreciated is the fact the Huston Plan for the intelligence services neatly prefigured Nixon’s later (and equally unrealized) plans for the radical centralization of the entirety of the federal bureaucracy through the creation of a ‘Super-Cabinet’; under this plan, four traditional Cabinet posts (State, Defense, Justice and Treasury) would be retained, while all of the others, and their associated independent agencies, would be brought under the direct control of a new set of cabinet officials responsible for four policy domains: Economic Affairs, Human Resources, National Resources, and Community Development. ‘In effect, this would accomplish two goals: streamline all of the dozens of helter-skelter and redundant independent agencies into four departments that were manageable; and concentrate them so that all departments of the executive branch of government would be controlled by the White House.’

The enactment of the Huston Plan was effectively blocked by the bureaucratic intransigence of Hoover, causing Nixon to feel compelled to create his own private domestic counter-intelligence force. The President, in his signature ‘Gangster-ese’, made clear to White House special counsel Charles W. Colson his desire to create an entire series of clandestine measures to prevent media leaks within the Executive branch.

I don’t give a damn how it is done, do whatever has to be done to stop these leaks and prevent further unauthorized disclosures; I don’t want to be told why it can’t be done. The government cannot survive, it cannot function, if anyone can run out

10 Haldeman, 168.
11 Theoharis and Cox, 470-77 and Gentry, 652-8.
and leak whatever documents he wants to...I want to know who is behind this and I want the most complete investigation that can be conducted...I don’t want excuses, I want results. I want it done, whatever the cost.12

Although the paragon of cold-blooded careerism, there is little doubt that Hoover acted out of an overriding impulse to pre-empt a parapolitical catastrophe when thwarting Nixon over the Huston Plan.

Yet to Hoover the act [of undermining the Huston Plan] was not only rational but necessary. If the extreme [domestic counter-intelligence] options in the final report [of the intelligence heads] were adopted, and implemented, and the wholesale bugging, tapping, mail opening, and break-ins became known—as almost invariably they would be, when attempted by amateurs—the Nixon administration could easily self-destruct. By cutting off liaison, Hoover hoped to distance the FBI, and his own reputation, from the inevitable holocaust.13

There is no doubt that there is a direct clandestine ‘connection’ between the failure of the Huston Plan and Colson’s creation of a secret White House counter-intelligence unit, euphemistically known as ‘the Plumbers’, who proved to be the ultimate instigators of NIXON/WATERGATE—the notorious slush fund at the heart of the Watergate scandal (‘follow the money’) was created primarily to finance the off-the-books operations of the para-intelligence system.

Although the Huston Plan was officially aban-

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12Kutler, 108.
13Gentry, 655.
doned, its measures were used in a variety of forms, the most extreme being the creation of the Special Investigative Unit, more familiarly known as the ‘Plumbers’. Ostensibly established to determine the source of new leaks from inside the Administration, the Plumbers graduated to ‘black bag jobs’ and illegal entries. The linkage between the official scuttling of the Huston Plan and the Plumbers is curiously mixed. Some argued—most notably [FBI Deputy Director for Domestic Intelligence] William Sullivan—that killing the plan led to the creation of the Plumbers, to mounting similar enterprises, and thus, to Watergate. [John] Ehrlichman said that the inability of the White House to get rid of Hoover necessitated finding ‘other ways of doing things.’ Huston heatedly denied that his plan offered a model for the Plumbers and other Watergate-related enterprises, yet conceded that if Hoover had gone along with the plan, the Administration would have never had to do its own ‘black-bag jobs.’

The Plumbers, then, were more than a ‘simple’ extension of Nixon’s para-government; they were a semi-autonomous covert entity that was in direct competition with the myriad CIA and FBI domestic counter-intelligence operations that were being run simultaneously and, very often, within the same political spaces. And all of this during the most acutely sensitive, and dangerous, parapolitical moment for Nixon: the simultaneous alienation of both the Yankee and Cowboy factions. The Cowboys were alienated by the retreat from full Pacifism; the Yankees were alienated through their marginalization within the executive foreign and military policy decision-making processes. And both effects ultimately flowed from the systemically clandestine nature of

14 Kutler, 102; for the creation and early history of the Plumbers, see ibid, 102-25.
Nixonian governance. Kissinger himself has made this clear.

Nixon feared and shrank from imposing [overt] discipline. But he was determined to achieve his purposes; he thus encouraged procedures unlikely to be recommended in textbooks on public administration that, crab-like, worked privily around existing structures. It was demoralizing for the bureaucracy, which, cut out of the process, reacted by accentuating the independence and self-will that had caused Nixon to bypass it in the first place.\textsuperscript{15}

But prospectively even more dangerous, as Hoover might have intuited, was the easily foreseeable reaction of the Cowboys, especially those of the JCS; in the words of Admiral Thomas Moorer (Chief of Naval Operations, 1967-70 and Chief of the JCS, 1970-74): “The dislike of Kissinger came down to one word: détente—détente with the Soviet Union.”\textsuperscript{16}

In sharp contrast to the ‘pure’ Cowboy Johnson, from whose historical record on Vietnam we can infer that he never met a General that he did not like, it is Nixon’s hopelessly entangled relationship with the Department of Defense itself that provides the key to understanding the extraordinarily convoluted para-political dynamics of the NIXON/WATERGATE.

Nixon’s relationships with the senior military officers of the nation were the most complex of those within the upper echelon [of government]. It was impossible to carry out the war in Southeast Asia without cooperation from the Pentagon, and such matters [central to the overall success of the

\textsuperscript{15} Colodny and Gettlin, 9.
\textsuperscript{16} Hougan, 76.
‘Secret Plan’] as the secret bombing of Cambodia and the war against North Vietnamese cities required the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But Kissinger courted individual service chiefs and encouraged them to report directly to him rather than to Secretary [of Defense Melvin] Laird. He also, on behalf of the President, requested that the JCS set up a ‘backchannel’ through which he and Nixon, could transmit private messages within the government and abroad. Such backchannels were normally operated for the government by the CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA), but Nixon wanted to circumvent those intelligence agencies. Using special codes, teletypes, and secure terminals located at the Pentagon and the White House Situation Room, the President and his National Security Advisor could send and receive messages to selected American officials and members of foreign governments around the world without alerting the rest of the United States government.17

The supreme danger of this heavy reliance upon backchannels’, as with the earlier case of JFK, of course, was that it left the White House unusually dependent upon, and therefore vulnerable to, that very military complex whose Cowboy agenda the Executive was covertly attempting to terminate. Presidential Domestic Affairs special adviser John Ehrlichman once remarked upon the tangible ‘invisible presence’ of the Armed Forces within the Nixon administration.

Reflecting on those events...Ehrlichman says he now realizes how vulnerable the White House was to military surveillance. ‘All the cars that we rode in at the White House were driven by military drivers...All of the telephone calls that we

17 Colodny and Gettlin, 8.
made in and out of our homes, in and out of Camp David, were through a military switchboard. It was a little bit like the purloined letter. It was there so plainly nobody noticed it most of the time. We talked in the cars, we talked on our phones, we talked from Camp David, and thought nothing about it. This was part of the warp of the place, that you had military listening or in a position to listen to everything."

An obviously Debordean question comes to mind: if JFK’s murder was the JCS’s attempt to pre-empt Détente I, then would this explain the strikingly, almost pathologically, paranoid behavior of both Nixon and Kissinger as they, in full knowledge of the clandestine nature of the earlier false-flag, attempted a parallel ‘back-run’ around the same military intelligence establishment that proved itself capable of killing its own Chief Executive? And an even more wonderfully ironic Debordean insight: even if the Warren Commission was correct in its conclusions, would not Nixon’s own history of clandestine proclivities lend him to (misinterpret) the public event of Dealey Plaza as an exercise in spectacular power (counter-intelligence plus disinformation), causing him to fall within a parapolitical trap entirely of his own making? Just as with JFK/DALLAS, NIXON/WATERGATE erupted as a parapolitical counter-action in the form of a false-flag spectacle, this time as a bloodless ‘constitutional crisis’ provoked, crucially, by the enemy-from-within; here, the moment of Schmitt’s ‘decision’ is constitutional in nature, not Executive (unlike JFK and Tonkin), but no less of an ‘emergency’ by that fact alone.

‘THIS IS A COMEDY OF ERRORS (=DOUBLES)’

By God, [Nixon’s] got some former CIA men working for him that I’d kick out of my office. Someday, that bunch will serve him up a fine mess.’—J. Edgar Hoover

Jim Hougan, the author of Secret Agenda: Watergate, Deep Throat and the CIA (1984), the greatest parapolitical account of NIXON/WATERGATE\(^1\), provides us with an interesting anecdote; ‘In a conversation with President Nixon, John Dean would one day wonder: “How did it all start? Where did it start? It started with an instruction to me from Bob Haldeman to see if we couldn’t set up a perfectly legitimate campaign intelligence operation over at the Re-Election Committee.”\(^2\)

Following Hougan I have constructed a ‘minimalist’ theory of the spectacle of NIXON/WATERGATE that, in many decisive respects, parallels the one that I have formulated for JFK/DALLAS. Just as with Oswald-Phillips/Barnes, it consists of only two components; it is the ‘deep background’ that is complex.

(i) G. Gordon Liddy, the ostensible leader of the Plumber’s espionage team that broke into Democratic Party Headquarters in the Watergate Hotel, was in actuality a dupe of his subordinates, E. Howard Hunt and James McCord.

(ii) Hunt and McCord were secretly working for

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\(^1\) During my work with the Watergate literature, I have not been able to determine that Hougan has ever been made the subject of the same sort of disinformation campaign suffered by many of the JFK/DALLAS researchers.

\(^2\) Hougan, 96.
the CIA while using the White House as a cover for domestic intelligence operations that (in Hunt’s case) included spying upon the Nixon administration.  

The exact nature of the motive of the stage-managed break-in on June 17, 1972 is not of central importance; for Hougan the ‘real’ targets of the bugging operation were the clients of the prostitutes in the Columbia Plaza Apartments for purposes of political blackmail, while for Don Fulsom the objective of the burglars was to acquire information as to the content of suspected conversations between the DNC Chairman, Larry O’Brien and sometime Nixon supporter Howard Hughes, who had been supplying bribes to the President in exchange for legal favors. What really matters here is that: (i) both Hunt and McCord were active CIA operatives for the whole of their time in the White House; (ii) that the CIA had consciously decided to destabilize the Nixon presidency; and (iii) that both Hunt and/or McCord deliber-

21 Ibid, xvii. An interesting fact about McCord was that he also served as a lieutenant-colonel in a special military reserve unit based in Washington DC that was attached to the highly obscure Office of Emergency Preparedness; ‘the unit’s assignment was to draw up lists of radicals and to help develop contingency plans for censorship of the news media and US mail in time of war.’ Bernstein and Woodward, 23.

22 Ibid, xviii.

23 Fulsom, 160-1. It was the strong suspicion of the White House that O’Brien was a covert political lobbyist for Hughes, whose global empire of corporations had been effectively folded into a parallel network of CIA ‘front’ companies. By the early 1970s, ‘the Hughes organization was servicing the CIA on a world-wide basis, becoming the largest private contractor employed by this agency. No job was too big or too small. Hughes Aircraft and the Hughes Tool Company were used as a “paymaster-type front” for undercover agents wherever they might be. Payments would usually be made in cash, Hughes-person to CIA-person, but at times cheques were drawn for CIA personnel on Hughes payroll accounts. Hughes would be reimbursed to the penny and mill by the CIA.’ Hinckle and Turner, 333.
ately sabotaged the Watergate break-in as the means of doing so, a view shared by no less than the White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman: ‘the CIA monitored the burglars throughout…the break-in was probably deliberately sabotaged.’ And it is very unlikely to have been an accident that the Watergate represents the re-emergence of the doubled ‘two Eduardos’ of ZAPATA: E. Howard Hunt and James McCord, both of whom appear to have been CIA ‘moles’ planted within the White House.

Beginning in the late fall of 1969, CIA officer Hunt began ‘pestering’ Colson for employment within the new Nixon Administration. As though to prove his status as a former CIA operative, Hunt formally retired from the Agency in 1970 and began (in yet another slyly Debor-dean touch) working for the Washington-based public relations firm the Robert R. Mullen Company, which was itself a ‘front’ corporation for central intelligence. As Hougan points out

The circumstances of Hunt’s retirement from the CIA are important. If it can be shown that his departure was merely an operational convenience, useful for purposes of deniability and, perhaps, infiltration, then it would appear that the CIA—and not the White House—was Hunt’s real principal throughout the Watergate affair. And there is much to suggest this.

24 Haldeman, 317.
25 For Hunt as CIA ‘mole’, see Hougan, 3-9; for McCord, see ibid, 9-26.
26 Ibid, 3.
27 Ibid, 6.
28 Ibid, 7. According to Hougan, ‘when it came time for Hunt to undertake a series of questionable intelligence operations [e.g., breaking into the offices of Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis J. Fielding; Hougan, Chapter Three], ostensibly on behalf of the White House, it was the CIA
As I have discussed, both Hunt and McCord were active in the Bay of Pigs operation, and, therefore, had known each other from at least April, 1961; both, had shared code-name ‘Eduardo’, and both, therefore, were highly familiar with the Operation MONGOOSE and Alpha/66 anti-Castro Cuban units. In April 1971 Hunt, once more under the moniker ‘Eduardo’, travelled to Miami, ostensibly for a ten-year re-union celebration of ZAPATA with local Cuban operatives; in fact, it was a mission to re-activate key anti-Castro agents who later became members of the Plumbers and, therefore, the burglars of the Watergate: Frank Sturgis, Bernard Barker, and Eugenio Martinez.

As Martinez makes clear…in his memoir about the April 1971 visit, Hunt’s purpose was recruitment. “What is Manolo doing?...What is Roman doing?”…He said that he wanted to meet with the old people. It was a good sign. We did not think he had come to Miami for nothing.’ It was in this way, then, that Hunt obtained his agents for secret operations that, as it happened, were as yet undreamed of by the Nixon administration, which would supposedly conceive of, and sponsor, them. As…Charles Colson put it in an interview with this writer: ‘Hunt’s visit to Barker [in April 1971] was, pure and simple, a get-ready-for-action call. You’d have to be an idiot to think otherwise.’

Leaning forward in his chair with a look of anger that provided him with the extensive ‘technical support’ that the missions required. In a similar way, Hunt relied upon veteran CIA contract agents to help carry out these operations, and even applied to the CIA’s External Employment Assistance Branch (EEAB) for help in locating men skilled at lock-picking, electronic sweeps and entry operations. He used the agency to conduct computer name traces as required, and had a sterile telephone installed in the White House to ensure the secrecy of his regular telephone conversations with unidentified officials of the CIA…Hunt’s retirement from the CIA was dubious in the extreme.’ Ibid, 8-9.
and perplexity, Colson added: ‘But there wasn’t any action anticipated. Not then. The Pentagon Papers hadn’t been published. The Plumbers were months away. So, you tell me: how did Hunt know [in April] that he’d need the Cubans?’

It is also important to keep in mind that, as of April 1971, Martinez was still formally working for the CIA; ‘A veteran of Operation MONGOOSE, Martinez was actually still employed by the Agency at the time of the break-in, receiving a retainer of $100 a month for reporting on the Cuban exile community in Miami.’ This rather inconvenient truth was assigned the greatest importance by Haldeman in his post-NIXON/WATERGATE memoirs: ‘The CIA was connected to the Watergate matter in innumerable ways; indeed, at least one of the burglars, Martinez, was still on the CIA payroll on June 17, 1972—and almost certainly reporting to his CIA case officer about the proposed break-in even before it happened. The first lawyer in the police precinct when the burglars were brought in the night of June 17 was reportedly a CIA-connected attorney, there to represent men who had allegedly retired from the agency and had no connection with it.’ For Hougan, then, what all these ‘clandestine contacts add up to is the clear implication that the CIA was Howard Hunt’s real principal during this time of employment at the White House. Once this is understood, the possibility suggests itself that several of Hunt’s White House operations, publicly described as failures, were actually success-

29 Hougan, 29.
30 Powers, 289.
31 Robert Ritchie; Hougan, 220.
33 Haldeman, 34.
ful.’\(^3^4\) Thus, within the mass media, Hunt would, by virtue of this immaculate incompetence, come to be seen as a kind of clown—a spook whose operations inevitably backfired. Thus, the press—while condemning those who dismissed the Watergate break-in as a mere ‘caper’ or ‘third-rate burglary’—would nevertheless be quick to pronounce the burglars ‘bunglers’. Just as the Nixon forces wished that we would dismiss the break-in with a laugh, so did liberal Democrats and the press intend that we should dismiss the burglars with a grin. This was so, in large part, because Nixon’s enemies wished to make a morality play of the affair. Necessarily, this entailed a simple story with the President at its center. Close scrutiny of the burglars (and of the burglaries themselves) was to be avoided because such scrutiny raised questions about their loyalty to President Nixon. This, in turn, obscured the issue of presidential guilt and, in doing so, threatened Nixon’s ouster. In a sense, therefore, the Democrats and the press were as much opponents of a full investigation of the Watergate affair as was the White House itself. Both sides had reason to fear the truth.\(^3^5\)

And just as with JFK/DALLAS, we have an implicit division of labor (and intent) between the spectacle itself and the media representation (‘the cover-up’) of the

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\(^3^4\) Hougan, 55. Commenting upon the Senate Watergate Committee’s minority staff findings of CIA involvement in the burglary, Minority Counsel Fred Thompson remarked, "the question was becoming one of whether the CIA had been a participant or a benign observer of the break-in or, in view of the bungling of the burglary and the mysterious circumstances surrounding it, whether CIA operatives had perhaps sabotaged the break-in to weaken the White House and strengthen the Agency in its struggle for survival." Haldeman, 135.

\(^3^5\) Hougan, 55.
event, Phase I (‘the burglary’) and Phase II (‘the story’). The vital difference, however, is that unlike with the earlier false-flag, both phases of NIXON/WATERGATE were thoroughly integrated and coordinated, constituting a far more integrated, and integrating, exercise of the strategy-of-tension, this representing the thorough convergence of Cowboy and Yankee interests.

**Nixon/Watergate as Integrated Spectacle**

“Our recent history is a forgery, the by-product of secret agents acting on secret agendas of their own.” – Jim Hougan

“A strange and basically stupid sequence then unfolded.” — H.R. Haldeman

In his *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, Debord makes much of Nixon and Watergate, although in a manner that the orthodox North American liberal would find scandalous: the successful stage-managing of the constitutional *coup d’etat* at the heart of the NIXON/WATERGATE spectacle signifies not the apotheosis of the transparently democratic public State but its termination.

The widespread talk of a ‘legal state’ only dates from the moment when the modern, so-called democratic state generally ceased to be one… Never before has censorship been so perfect… People often cite the United States as an exception because there Nixon eventually came to grief with a series of denials whose clumsiness was too cynical: but this entirely local exception, for which there were some historical causes, clearly no longer holds true, since Reagan has recently
been able to do the same thing with impunity.\textsuperscript{36}

Even more than either with JFK/DALLAS or LBJ/TONKIN, NIXON/WATERGATE was played out through the media capillaries of the integrated spectacle; ‘The generic term “Watergate” eventually became synonymous with media leaks.’\textsuperscript{37} It was the sheer saturation of the media coverage that invested the spectacle with power while, paradoxically, enabling the clandestine nature of the deep event to hide in plain sight; ‘For nearly two years the country had been blitzed by the minutiae of Watergate and force-fed the images of increasingly uninteresting men. Was there anybody left who did not consider himself a reluctant expert on the topic? Probably not.’\textsuperscript{38} For it was precisely through the mass conscription of the mass population into the ranks of the ‘experts’ that the integrative function of the spectacle was allowed to establish itself as ‘common sense’.

Of all the media that helped develop and popularize [the orthodox] version, none was of greater importance to the story than Watergate’s ‘hometown newspaper,’ the \textit{Washington Post}…the \textit{Post} was uniquely well equipped to cover and influence this particular story. It was the newspaper that the scandal’s principals read each morning at the breakfast table, and, as such, it contributed directly to shaping the debate within both the capital and the Capitol…The \textit{Post}, moreover, was a newspaper whose senior editors and reporters belonged to that part of the Washington establishment which is immune to changes of political ad-

\textsuperscript{36} Debord, \textit{Comments}, 70 and 22. The reference to Reagan relates to the Iran-Contra Affair (or ‘Iran-Gate’).

\textsuperscript{37} Kutler, 190.

\textsuperscript{38} Hougan, xvi.
In truth the Post ‘did not truly reveal the story of the initial break in and subsequent cover-up. Rather, it reported the results from ongoing investigations being conducted by the federal prosecutors, and a grand jury in the summer/fall of 1972.’ Instead, that newspaper’s primary function lay with the publication of ‘“eye-popping stories, preceding disclosures by law enforcement…that built momentum and drew in the rest of the press at a time when Watergate might otherwise have faded from public view.”’ Throughout NIXON/WATERGATE there appears to have been at work a very precise mechanism of timed disclosures and strategically calculated leaks, the mass media at all times operating in prefect synchronization with the FBI and the Department of Justice.

Contrary to the widely held perception that the Washington Post ‘uncovered’ Watergate, the newspaper essentially tracked the progress of the FBI’s investigation, with a time delay ranging from weeks to days, and published elements of the prosecutor’s case well in advance of the trial. Keeping the story in the news was meaningful and important, of course, especially when that newspaper was the Post. Owing to its prize read-

40 Ibid, fn. 7, 203. ‘From the outset, local Washington reporting, especially in the Post, closely tracked the FBI’s work, relying primarily on raw Bureau reports.’ Kutler, 190
42 In Haldeman’s opinion, even with the compounding errors of judgment of the White House during the infamous ‘cover-up’, ‘it took a series of almost incredible “breaks,” happening at precisely the right times, to escalate a war with the [Washington] power blocs into a Presidential catastrophe [that] even [Nixon’s] enemies could not envision.’ Haldeman, 188.
ership, it had an influence that far outstripped its circulation. Every important official in Washington and every reporter based there read the Post, which meant the newspaper was an elite publication in that it helped define the news coming out of Washington…Perhaps most significantly, the Nixon administration reacted initially to the Post's stories by denying and dissembling, creating an epic credibility gap with the media and eventually the public from which the White House never recovered.43

So integrating was the spectacle (as-media) that even the nominally independent judiciary had no other realistic political option than to serve as the hapless pawn of Phase II; for all intents and purposes Watergate Judge John Sirica was ‘co-opted’ by the Post.

Sirica… read [The Post] on his way to court each day, with the result that its questions often became his questions44… As the Washingtonian, a liberal magazine, described Sirica’s conduct of the trial: he ‘badgered, accused and castigated witnesses, prosecutors and defense lawyers. He read transcripts and confidential bench conferences to the jury. He used the threat of lengthy sentences to force defendants into abandoning their constitutional rights. He turned the trial into an inquisition, and justice into a charade.’45

In this light, the significance (and timing) of James McCord’s notorious (and unsolicited) letter of confession to Judge Sirica—claiming that the CIA was being framed by the White House as being behind the break-in—at the very moment that the prosecution of the burglars had ef-

43 Holland, 3.
44 Hougan, 262.
fectively stalled, becomes that much greater.46

The impact of McCord’s March 19 [1973] letter to Sirica is lost on no one. That letter is what kicked Nixon over the precipice by conclusively identifying the Watergate Operation with the White House...[McCord] was the first to say (1) that John Mitchell was implicated; (2) that CRREP [Committee to Re-elect the President] money was used to hush up the Plumbers [predominantly Hunt]; (3) that the White House was trying to hide behind the CIA and at the same time put the CIA in its pocket; (4) that Nixon was the master of the White House cover-up operation.47

No less did the trial of the Watergate burglars itself become a spectacle-within-a-spectacle, both a cause and an effect of the integrative function. This is precisely what we should suspect, given the Post’s not inconsiderable ties with the CIA. Central to this parapolitical network was Robert Bennett, Hunt’s supervisor at the Robert R. Mullen Company, a CIA company that had extensive involvement with the JM/WAVE affiliated broadcasting station Radio Free Cuba, set up in the immediate aftermath of the Bay of Pigs.48 A CIA agent himself, Bennett met with his own Agency case officer Martin Lukoskie on July 10, 1972, less than four weeks after the burglary.

46 Bernstein and Woodward, 197-8.
47 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy War, 297. It is also worth pointing out that burglar Frank Sturgis had been both a friend and a ‘contact’ for Washington syndicated columnist Jack Anderson since the Bay of Pigs. Anderson was also a friend and protégé of JCS mole Charles Radford. Anderson was also the journalist who published a leak concerning the White House’s tilt away from India and towards Pakistan during the East Pakistan War in 1971, infuriating both Nixon and Kissinger. Colodny and Gettlin, 18-20 and 14-16.
48 Hougan, fn. 11 265; 273.
Later that month, Lukoskie submitted a handwritten memorandum of his most recent meeting with Bennett directly to CIA director Helms; ‘Mr. Bennett related that he has now established “back door entry” to the Edward Bennett Williams law firm which is representing the Democratic Party in its suit for damages resulting from the Watergate incident.’ And in March 1973, Lukoskie’s supervisor, Eric Eisenstadt, submitted his own memorandum on Bennett to Helms.

Mr. Bennett said…that he has been deeding stories to Bob Woodward of the Washington Post with the understanding that there is no attribution to Bennett. Woodward is suitably grateful for the fine stories and by-lines which he gets and protects Bennett (and the Mullen Company)… [Bennett also] said that, if necessary, he could have his father, Senator Bennett of Utah, intercede with Senator [Sam] Ervin [head of the Senate committee investigating Watergate]. His conclusion then was that he could handle the Ervin Committee if the Agency can handle Howard Hunt.

Just as Phase I of NIXON/WATERGATE came down to parapolitical nomadicism of two covert agents (Hunt and McCord), it would appear that Phase II was the handiwork of other equally clandestine doubles.

**Bob Woodward: The Moorer-Radford Affair**

“In this matter, nothing is beyond the realm of possibility.” —Richard M. Nixon

49 Ibid, 331. The official Senate Watergate Report stated that Bennett ‘served as the point of contact between Hunt and Liddy during the two weeks following the Watergate break-in.’ Haldeman, 141.

50 Hougan, 333-4.
It is today fairly well established that Bob Woodward, the iconic ‘heroic’ reporter most closely identified with ‘the story of Watergate,’ was an agent of Naval Intelligence (NIS) throughout his journalistic career. After graduating from Yale in 1965, Woodward enlisted in the Navy and was assigned to serve as communications officer aboard the USS Wright, the designated National Emergency Command Post Afloat (NECPA), the President’s command vessel in the event of ‘national emergency’.\(^\text{51}\) In 1969, under the tutelage of Admiral Robert O. Welander, Woodward was assigned to the Pentagon, where he served as the communications duty officer for then Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Moorer. In Hougan’s own words

> It was a fascinating assignment for someone so young. In his new position, Woodward presided over all communications traffic going to and from the CNO’s office. This included top–secret communiques from the White House, the CIA, the National Security Agency (NSA), the State Department, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the NSC…He held, in other words, a position of strategic trust within the intelligence community; while others of much higher rank and longer service labored within the constraints of the ‘need to know’ stricture, Woodward was in an oversight position vis–à–vis a broad spectrum of interagency intelligence operations.\(^\text{52}\)

Possibly of even greater significance was the ‘political’ relationship between Woodward’s commanding officer, Admiral Moorer, and the Nixon White House; what made Moorer an exceptionally powerful CNO ‘was his

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51 Ibid, 293-4.
52 Ibid, 294-5.
ability to get along well with two of the administration’s most powerful figures, [Attorney-General] John Mitchell and Henry Kissinger. Because he was trusted by them, very little was kept from him, and the man through whom much of that information passed was Lieutenant Woodward.\(^{53}\)

The complicated, and still shadowy, history of NIXON/WATERGATE as a deep event illuminates clearly the covert dimensions of the crusader journalist-hero Bob Woodward. In December 1971, the White House was made aware of a covert military intelligence ring operating within the NSC. The locus of the operation was with the JCS liaison office to the NSC, headed, at that time, by Admiral Robert O. Welander. Under Welander’s direction, Navy Yeoman Charles Edward Radford had penetrated the inner workings of the NSC as a mole, and had begun passing on sensitive NSC documents to the JSC; most of these documents appear to have related to the groundwork negotiations for Détente II. Radford’s materials were handed over to Welander in person, who then physically conveyed them to Admiral Moorer, who had been appointed Chief of the JCS by Nixon the previous July.\(^{54}\) According to NIXON/WATERGATE researchers Len Colodny and Robert Gettlin,

Radford knew that his actions gave his superiors ‘an excellent overview of what was going on in the White House...Knowledge is power and the more they knew about all this peripheral data [regarding the White House’s operations] the more they were able to circumvent and to maneuver and to accomplish their own ends.’ And what, we asked him, did he think those ends were? He told

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53 Hougan, 295.
54 Colondy and Gettlin, 1-28, generally.
us, ‘Well, bringing Nixon down. Really, getting rid of Kissinger—Kissinger was a real monkey wrench in things.’

Commenting to both investigators about Radford’s behavior, Rear Admiral Gene R. LaRocque remarked that ‘You have to understand...that with the military it’s “us versus them.” The Navy in particular. Civilians are all to be feared and distrusted and guarded against...So that reading their traffic...was all considered legitimate.”

What LaRocque did not helpfully ruminate upon was the fact that Welander was Woodward’s commanding officer on the young lieutenant’s second posting, the USS Fox. Furthermore, from 1969-70, Woodward served as the JCS briefing officer to General Alexander Haig, Kissinger’s chief aide on the NSC, and someone who was closely connected to Radford—in December, 1970, Radford was appointed military aide-de-camp to Haig during the General’s trip to Saigon and Phnom Penh. And it was Haig, as JCS liaison to Kissinger at the NSC, who helped establish the military back-channel that permitted the National Security Adviser to by-pass both the Departments of State and Defense.

From all of this, I can only conclude the following: if Woodward continued an informal connection with the JCS during the time of the Watergate scandal (as both Hunt and McCord apparently did with the CIA), then it increases the possibility that the Washington Post’s coverage of the story, even if only unintentionally, formed part of a managed false-flag spectacle. The exact same, in fact, seems to have

55 Ibid, 28.
56 Ibid, 13.
57 Ibid, 76.
58 Ibid, 83.
59 Ibid, 24-5.
been the case with the FBI.

**Deep Throat/W. Mark Felt**

‘I suspect that in [Mark Felt’s] mind I was his agent.’—Bob Woodward

‘I want every fucking cocktail party in Georgetown talking about this [Watergate].’—Ben Bradlee

Until former FBI Associate Director W. Mark Felt’s ‘outing’ as Deep Throat in 2005, Woodward had always strenuously denied that his cryptic source ‘Deep Throat’ (spectacularly portrayed by Hal Holbrook in the equally spectacular film of Nixon/Watergate, Alan Pakula’s *All The President’s Men*, a blockbuster adaptation of the spectacular ‘tell-all’ book of the same title, co-authored by Woodward and Carl Bernstein) had been a member of the intelligence community. This, of course, was disingenuous; ‘The FBI has always been responsible for domestic counter-intelligence operations, and a member of the intelligence community ever since that term became part of Washington parlance.’

Although Woodward repeatedly presented Felt’s motives as ones of unabashed patriotism and civic virtue, Hougan claims to have discerned a revealing pattern of fake altruism to Deep Throat’s well-timed leaks.

60 Felt served as Associate Director of the Bureau from May 1972 to June 1973.

61 Holland, 181.

62 The almost visceral effects of Felt’s strategic campaign of the clandestine is well conveyed by Haldeman: ‘It took bombshell after bombshell…to destroy a powerful President. What is fascinating in
It may be...that [Deep] Throat remains anonymous [as of 1984] because if he was identified our perception of him and of the Post’s Watergate reportage would change. That is, it may be that Throat’s position within the Nixon administration was such that he would stand revealed as a Machiavellian figure moved more by his own ambitions than by any concern for fair play in national politics. In which case, Woodward and the Post would seem to be mere tools in a power struggle. So there is reason to be skeptical. While Woodward and Bernstein prefer to believe in Deep Throat’s altruism, we should not trust their judgment on the matter: the Post’s reporters, after all, have an important stake in the selflessness of their source.63

Much more recently, Max Holland has also challenged the authenticity of Felt’s nobler form of patriotism by arguing for the careerist motivation of his leaking: angered at being passed over for promotion to the Directorship of the FBI in favor of Justice Department official (and Nixon lackey) L. Patrick Gray III, Felt attempted to force the White House to reverse itself by illuminating Gray’s incompetence through a series of selective leaks to the press, primarily The Post and Time-Life.64

The portrait of Felt that emerges when we follow

reconstructing the true story of Watergate is both the timing of those bombshells and the surprise twists which made their shock even more effective. Nixon was never prepared. Time and again after he thought he had stabilized his ship of state, and knew every danger lurking in the waters, another torpedo would explode amidships and Nixon and his crew, including me, would frantically be shoring up bulkheads against a sea of outrage.’ Haldeman, 232.

63 Hougan, 281.
64 In All the President’s Men, Woodward provides several examples, perhaps unknowingly, of Felt’s multiple strategic leaking; see Bernstein and Woodward, 197-8.
this thread does not resemble any of Bob Woodward’s depictions [of Deep Throat]. Felt held the news media in contempt and was neither a high-minded whistle-blower, nor was he genuinely concerned about defending his institution’s integrity. He was not even hopelessly embittered—just calculating. A single-minded determination drove him, even as his chances [to be named Director], slim to begin with, evaporated…A key part of the argument here is that Mark Felt had no thought of bringing Nixon down…Nixon’s downfall was an entirely unanticipated result of Felt’s true and only aim.65

Of course, a potentially fatal flaw with Holland’s robust advocacy of the careerist theory of Deep Throat is that Holland himself may be a CIA asset embedded in the media, as has been argued by Mark Lane.66 If this is cor-
rect, what effect does this have on the veracity of Holland’s not implausible critique of Deep Throat-as-selfless-patriot?

The best answer may be that Felt’s covert stratagems constitute a possible continuation of the parapolitical fall-out prophesized by Hoover following the announcement of the Huston Plan. As Holland himself recognizes, ‘The Huston Plan threatened to encroach on the FBI’s turf and prerogatives from Hoover’s vantage point. And in point of fact, the White House was [apparently] completely unaware of the extent of the FBI’s vigorous counter-intelligence program (COINTELPROs) designed to disrupt, confuse, and ultimately vitiate domestic groups deemed subversive.’

It is also worth keeping in mind the memorandum of the Watergate saboteur James McCord, submitted on May 7, 1973 to Federal prosecutors and the Senate Watergate Investigating Committee:

> When…I saw [what was] happening to the FBI under Pat Gray—political control by the White House—it appeared then that the two Government agencies which should be able to prepare their reports, and to conduct their business with complete integrity and honesty in the national interest, were no longer going to be able to do so. That the nation was in serious trouble has since been confirmed by what happened in the case of Gray’s leadership of the FBI.

COINTELPRO was organized into six divisions: the

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*mountain of conflicting evidence*.

67 Holland, 206 fn. 5.

68 Haldeman, 144. Cf. Haldeman on McCord’s memo: ‘What he wrote in arcane bureaucratic language is that the CIA feared Nixon would preempt the CIA as it [sic] had the FBI.’ Ibid.
U.S. Communist Party (1956-71); the Socialist Worker’s Party (1961-71); the Puerto Rican national independence movement (1960-71); the KKK and affiliated ‘white hate’ groups (1964-71); the Black Panthers and allied ‘black militant’ groups (1967-71); and the generic ‘New Left’ (1968-71). Felt was a senior coordinator of these programs, and it is not difficult to see, as does Holland, that Felt’s theatrical assumption of the covert role as Deep Throat was a direct continuation of his earlier counter-intelligence efforts.

He stayed at the Bureau [after Gray’s appointment] and worked for almost a year on what might be called his own psychological warfare plan… [COINTELPRO] was designed to disrupt and confuse his adversaries and manipulate those in power. Pat Gray and [Associate Director William Sullivan] were the intended victims. The White House, and to a lesser extent, Congress, were the targets of his manipulations, and the press was his instrument of choice. The bulk of Felt’s effort would consist of trying to prove to the White House, through anonymous links to the media, that Gray was dangerously incompetent and incapable of running the Bureau. Felt was supremely confident that because of his extensive counter-intelligence experience, he could keep his hand invisible.

Also worth noting was that leaking information ‘to “certifiably reliable” reporters and columnists was a central component in all the FBI’s COINTELPRO [programs] and also used as part of its orchestrated effort to discredit Martin Luther King, Jr.’ Apparently, Felt’s second fa-

69 Holland, 206 fn. 5.
70 Ibid, 9.
71 Ibid, 209 fn.6.
vorite ‘reliable’ reporter, after Bob Woodward, was organized crime reporter Sandy Smith of *Time* magazine; ‘one criticism of Smith that would eventually be leveled was that he was *too* close to the FBI—he would later be identified as one of the reporters who regularly received COINTELPRO leaks.’\(^7^2\) And Time Inc. was owned by Clare Luce Booth, the widow of founder Henry Luce, both of whom were CIA assets; during the Cuba Project, both *Time* and *Life* magazines provided extensive coverage of the ‘private’ commando raids ‘staged’ by the extremist paramilitaries Alpha/66 and Commandos L.\(^7^3\)

The more that I explore the COINTELPRO dimensions of Felt’s career, the more convinced I become that Deep Throat was a singularly spectacular persona within a much wider network of parapolitical affiliations centered around the Huston Plan;\(^7^4\) rather than simple careerism, Felt was acting to subvert Nixon-appointee Gray as one part of a much larger deep event.

What really mattered [to the FBI] was that Gray was loyal to Nixon personally and might even put the president’s interests and desires above the Bureau’s…Given that Gray’s only Washington experience was in… [the Department of Justice], his appointment suggested that Nixon was going to at least try to assert greater control over the

\(^7^2\) Ibid, 212 fn. 22.

\(^7^3\) Fonzi, 53-4. Through his private endorsement of these ‘renegade’ groups, Luce, ‘the great editorial innovator, invented a new form of journalism for which he is yet to be credited…paramilitary journalism.’ Hinckle and Turner, 187. In an interesting anecdote about Clare, Fonzi relates that Luce ‘hadn’t thought about her boat crew [of ‘sponsored’ anti-Castro terrorists] until the day that President Kennedy was killed.’ Ibid, 54.

\(^7^4\) Holland provides ample grounds for more advanced parapolitical speculation about Deep Throat than he himself offers in his main narrative, although most of this is assigned to the Endnotes of *Leak.*
Bureau via his political appointees in the Justice Department.\textsuperscript{75}

But, in an even ‘deeper’ sense, there may have been an overriding impulse to prevent disclosure of the full extent of the COINTELPRO programs; most disturbing is the case of Arthur Bremer, the unsuccessful ‘lone gunman’ of the assassination attempt against Governor George Wallace of Alabama, who, although clearly acting alone, appears to betray some signs of counter-intelligence manipulation. According to Holland

Nixon wanted to depict Bremer as a pro-McGovern radical, even though he was generally a-political and basically a nihilist [sic]. The president discussed with Charles Colson the possibility of planting left-wing tracts in Bremer’s apartment, and Colson was in frequent contact with Mark Felt the night of the attempted assassination [May 15, 1972]. The Associated Press, interestingly, distributed a story that evening (citing a source close to the investigation) that alleged scraps of paper in Bremer’s apartment ‘showed he aligned himself with “left-wing causes.”’\textsuperscript{76}

An obvious question to ask at this stage is given the intensely pluralistic nature of the Dual State, could both the CIA and the FBI have been running independent but parallel cover-up operations (Phase II) during NIXON/WATERGATE? The FBI feared that Nixon’s penetration of the Bureau would lead to the White House’s discovery of deep COINTELPRO operations rendering senior Bureau members subject to political

\textsuperscript{75} Holland, 21 and 23. The same had long been suspected about JFK in his appointment of his brother RFK as Attorney-General.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, 210 fn.9. I discuss the issue of Bremer in more detail, below, this chapter and Chapter Five.
blackmail, allowing Nixon to exert by other, and even more insidious means, that unprecedented degree of political control sought through the Huston Plan. And the CIA feared the ultimate unravelling of Phase II of JFK/DALLAS; reputedly, Richard Helms ‘was particularly exercised by five stories written by New York Times reporter Tad Szulc in late June 1972… [whose] consistent theme was that the parties culpable for the break-in were the same people responsible for the Agency’s Bay of Pigs operation in 1961, that is CIA officers and anti-Castro Cubans.’

A striking confirmation of Oglesby’s hypothesis of Dealey Plaza and the Watergate as somehow serving as parapolitical doubles.

**Parapolitical Symmetries: JFK/Dallas and Nixon/Watergate**

*‘The main enemy is within.’—Guy Debord*

If I ask the question posed by Oglesby’s work—‘what are the parapolitical symmetries between the Kennedy and Nixon administrations?’—then my answer must be that they managed to alienate both the Yankee and the Cowboy factions simultaneously. As a result, both administrations fell victim to a ‘silent’ *coup d’etat*, Kennedy’s by a spectacular assassination, Nixon’s by an equally spectacular constitutional crisis self-consciously stage-managed as a media-event. Roger Morris’ highly

77 Ibid, 217 fn.3.

78 If my musings are even remotely accurate, then the logic of spectacular power would explain why Nixon was not assassinated—it would have been one public execution too many, following JFK, RFK, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the myriad victims of COINTELPRO, such as Fred Hampton. By the same token, however, it does cast in a new light the still very shadowy affair of Arthur Bremer—a psychotic loner and
suggestive comments regarding JFK/DALLAS are equally applicable to NIXON/WATERGATE.

The means and methods [of the respective coups] are appropriate to the setting. No conspirators steal away to some secret command post. No tanks crouch among the tree-shaded streets behind the Capitol. We are witnessing the classically American genus of the coup d’etat, achieved by folly as well as cunning, by commercial calculus and public relations, by both the manipulation of institutions and their craven abdication, by cold intention and no little inadvertence, and—perhaps most essential—at no sacrifice of the popular mythology. (A distinguishing mark of the American coup is that it should remain concealed from its victims and history even after its successful execution.)

For Kennedy, his unsuccessful attempt to synthesize both through the JFK-LBJ/Massachusetts-Texas coalition led to interminable instability within the executive branch; for Nixon, Kennedy’s weird twin, his fervid double-crossing of both factions culminated in the ‘deep’ triple-cross of the clandestine para-government of the Nixon-Kissinger White House. On this second point, apparent would-be presidential assassin—who was reputedly stalking Nixon in 1972 before being ‘deflected’ towards Governor George Wallace of Alabama. Most striking is that Colson personally ordered none other than E. Howard Hunt to burglarize Bremer’s apartment after the Wallace shooting; according to the two Washington Post reporters, an anonymous attorney informed them that “Hunt said Colson wanted him to fly to Milwaukee immediately and break into Arthur Bremer’s apartment and bring back anything that might help in connecting Bremer to left-wing political causes.” See Bernstein and Woodward generally, 326-30. Among Hunt’s other clandestine accomplishments during the Nixon years was the forging of diplomatic cables that falsely implicated JFK in the sanctioning of the murder of President Ngo Diem of South Vietnam. Ibid, 306.

79 Roger Morris cited in Colodny and Gettlin, xiii.
Haldeman is quite enlightening on the profoundly alienating effect of both the ‘Super-Cabinet’ and the Huston Plan upon the essential ‘power blocs’ of Washington

Re-organization is the secret story of Watergate. That re-organization in the winter of 1972—very little known to the American public—eventually spurned into action against Nixon the great power blocs of Washington [mass media, the bureaucracy, the Congress, and the intelligence services]. All of them saw danger as the hated Nixon moved more and more to control the Executive Branch from the White House, as he was constitutionally mandated to do. What they feared was real. 80

An imperially covert Presidency demanded a clandestine resistance; the White House ‘was the focal point of an extraordinary degree of clandestine surveillance during the Nixon years’, including the possible ‘bugging’ of Nixon himself by the Plumbers. 81

One might be inclined to dismiss such reports with a shrug because, after all, they cannot be confirmed. But the leitmotif of bugging is so prevalent in the Watergate affair that it would be naïve to reject such reports out of hand. Indeed, as Nixon’s memoirs make clear, he himself suspected that he was the victim of electronic eavesdropping. Kissinger, too, fretted about ensuring the secrecy of White House communications. In fact, the President’s National Security Adviser was so concerned about the privacy of his communications, and the leaks bursting around him, that he rejected the usual communications channels available to his office. Rather than relying upon White

80 Haldeman, 168-9.
81 Hougan, 60.
House, State Department or CIA channels, Kissinger approached Admiral Thomas Moorer, then Chief of Naval Operations, and requested a medium that neither the CIA nor any other intelligence service could penetrate. Moorer accommodated the request by giving Kissinger access to the supersensitive SR-1 channel used by the Navy’s top-secret spy unit, Task Force 157. 82

And, of course, it was none other than Lieutenant Bob Woodward who was monitoring Kissinger’s multifarious ‘back-channel’ communications.

The communiques that Woodward handled [while seconded to the CNO] included those that were transmitted on the top-secret SR-1 channel assigned to Task Force 157…What is uncertain, however, is whether the channel was being used by Kissinger during the time that Woodward processed its contents: the summer of 1969 until June of 1970. While Kissinger is known to have used the channel to make arrangements for his mid-1971 visit to Peking, it is unclear whether this was the first occasion on which he began to use the channel or, indeed, just when those arrangements were made. Still, the Nixon administration’s first year, coincident with Woodward’s tour of duty at the Pentagon, was a critical one in terms of national security, and there were many secrets to which Woodward became privy. Besides Nixon’s vision of a rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China, efforts were under way to initiate secret negotiations with North Vietnam, and clandestine meetings were being held with the Soviets to prepare the way for SALT talks and, it was hoped, détente. Henry Kissinger’s plate was full. So was Moorer’s. And so, on a much lower

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82 Ibid, 61. Task Force 157 was responsible for the global monitoring of Soviet nuclear vessels.
level, was Woodward’s. 83

What is so frequently overlooked is that both Presidents, whatever their external differences, were at one in attempting to extract, or dis-embed, the Executive from the parapolitical networks of the Yankee-Cowboy symmetry. 84 In practical terms, this was manifested through the near-total breakdown in the relationship between the White House and the pluralistic and fragmenting networks of intelligence agencies. 85 Although one can only guess what conversations took place within the clandestine spaces of the Kennedy administration, one would be able to conclude from the direct evidence of the paper trail, that a de facto collapse in relations between the Presidency and the intelligence services, both civilian and military, had taken place immediately following the failure of ZAPATA. This is established with exceptional clarity in the two National Security Memorandums that were both issued on June 28, 1961 designating paramilitary warfare as a central pillar of national defense policy

83 Hougan, 295.

84 Although it may be pushing the similarities with Nixon’s Plumbers too far, it would appear that JFK had cultivated his own private, and parallel, unit of informal operatives: the ‘Irish Mafia’, whose members included Kenny O’Donnell, Dave Powers, William Walton, Edwin Guthman, John Seigenthaler and Richard Goodwin,

85 Interestingly, the only other U.S. President known to have seriously alienated the CIA—Jimmy Carter—also appears to have been politically undermined by the Agency. Following the 1977 dismissal of more than 800 covert operatives (or ‘cowboys’ in Agency-speak) by Carter’s select pick as CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner, rank and file intelligence officers defected to the Reagan-Bush election campaign, and covertly undermined Carter’s re-election efforts through a series of ‘dirty tricks’; CIA personnel ‘not only stole Carter’s briefing book before his television debate with Reagan, [but] they also set up Carter’s brother Billy to look like a cheer-leader for Libya, planted moles in the National Security Council, and even used the White House situation room to spy on Carter’s every move and waking thought.’ Hinckle and Turner, xxxii and xxxiv.
while simultaneously transferring operational responsibility exclusively to the Pentagon.

National Security Action Memorandum No. 56

It is important that we anticipate now our possible future requirements in the field of unconventional warfare and paramilitary operations.\(^86\)

National Security Action Memorandum No. 57

[The] Department of Defense will normally receive responsibility for overt paramilitary operations. Where such an operation is to be wholly covert or disownable, it may be assigned to CIA, provided that it is within the normal capabilities of the agency. Any large paramilitary operation wholly or partly covert which requires significant numbers of military trained personnel, amounts of military equipment which exceed normal CIA-controlled stocks and/or military experience of a kind and level peculiar to the Armed Services is properly the primary responsibility of the Department of Defense with the CIA in a supporting role.\(^87\)

Aggravating the intelligence establishment even further was the issuance of The Inspector General’s Survey of the Cuban Operation in October 1961, authored by Lyman Kirkpatrick. In response to the Survey, Deputy Director of the CIA, General Charles Cabell circulated a secret memo within the Agency on 15 December 1961,

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86 Stone and Sklar, 535.

87 Ibid, 544.
declaring that ‘The report misses objectivity by a wide margin. In unfriendly hands [JFK or RFK?], it can become a weapon unjustifiably to attack [sic] the entire mission, organization, and functioning of the agency.’

88 Cabell’s response was neither a-typical nor exaggerated; according to Colonel Jack Hawkins, “the CIA high command of that time seemed to reject the report out of hand, dismissed it as worthless and a threat to the CIA’s very existence.”

89 The Agency’s worst fears were subsequently realized through the intensification of JFK’s commitment to covert operations, flexible response, and counter-insurgency as pseudo-compromise, an effort to resolve the Yankee-Cowboy split in a manner that truly satisfied no one and yielded the intolerable outcome of the structural and operational subordination of civilian intelligence to military.

JFK had…moved to transfer CIA ‘operations’ to the American military in Vietnam. He was focusing covert military operations on Army Special Forces rather than CIA para-military. His 1963 Cuban initiatives were being built around interdepartmental (Army and State) efforts, placing the CIA operations staff (such as JM/WAVE) in a supporting rather than [a] controlling role. All of these moves were a direct blow to CIA operational autonomy and would not have gone unnoticed by individuals in roles such as David Morales at JM/WAVE…

90 And as Nixon himself seemed to be aware, Cuba was the parapolitical key to JFK’s fate-as-spectacle, the very one that he tried so desperately to avoid for himself.

88 Kornbluh, 242.
89 Ibid, 20.
90 Hancock, 365.
'THE WHOLE BAY OF PIGS THING...'

“Well, I've never understood, myself, what Cubans were doing there.”—H.R. Haldeman

“Nixon and Helms have so much on each other, neither of them can breathe.”—Senator Howard Baker

Although written from ‘the inside’ as one of the major participants of the events it purports to describe, Haldeman’s memoirs of NIXON/WATERGATE are nevertheless highly compelling, precisely because he so constantly highlights the parapolitical background of the Watergate ‘scandal’. Almost alone in the literature, Nixon’s former chief of staff consistently stresses the importance of the ‘deep politics’ of Nixon’s administrative assault upon both the Federal bureaucracy and the intelligence establishment.

The Huston Plan, even though it failed, brought home to the intelligence agencies a new threat. They feared that White House ‘interference’ could result in [the] disembowelment of their power. I believe that from that point on the CIA, for example, began monitoring the White House very, very closely through ‘plants,’ and perhaps other intelligence agencies, too. Were there CIA ‘plants’ in the White House?...I leave the question to rest as a part of a great mystery the significance of which may one day overshadow even Watergate: the manipulation of this nation by members of an intelligence agency.91

91 Haldeman, 109-10. There has long been speculation as to the role of Alexander Haig, Kissinger’s military liaison with the NSC, in Watergate
The utterly tangled nature of Nixon’s relationship with the secret services reached its apogee in Nixon’s brazen attempt to politically blackmail CIA Director Helms into assisting the White House’s Watergate cover-up operations by threatening to (counter-) leak damaging material concerning the Agency’s actions against Cuba. In some extraordinarily opaque manner, the Bay of Pigs was to serve as Nixon’s ‘hook’, which, when placed in historical context, provided the perfect nexus point between the false-flags theatres of Dealey Plaza and the Watergate Hotel.

In order to convey the full clandestine significance of this complicated sequence of events, I need to reproduce the history of the covertly taped White House conversations in some detail.

June 23, 1972. 10:00 am: meeting in the Oval Office between Nixon and Haldeman to discuss the Watergate burglary. This meeting constitutes the ‘smoking gun’ of NIXON/WATERGATE, where Nixon conspires to obstruct justice by attempting to compel the CIA to shut

and his possible connections with either the CIA or the DIA. Also highly suspect is Air Force Colonel Alexander Butterfield, who oversaw the installation and maintenance of the secret taping systems of the Nixon White House. On July 13 1973, Butterfield voluntarily informed the Senate Watergate committee as to the existence of the ‘Nixon tapes’; his exact words to the investigators were: “This is all something I know the President did not want revealed, but you asked me, and I feel it is something you ought to know about in your investigations. I was told no one was to know about the information I have told you.” Ibid, 327-8. Previously, Butterfield had served for several years as the Defense Department’s liaison with the CIA in Australia. Ibid, 323. Butterfield seems to have been especially close to Haig. During the Johnson administration, after several months of working together, Butterfield took over two tasks from Haig: overseeing the re-settlement of captured Bay of Pigs veterans that had been ransomed from Cuba and serving as Robert McNamara’s liaison with the White House; Butterfield ‘had what he described as a “strange role” that involved “a lot of undercover stuff.”’ Ibid, 322-3.
down the FBI investigation of the break-in. During this session, Nixon makes two highly elliptical comments linking Hunt to anti-Castro CIA activities.

Of course, this Hunt, that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab, there’s a hell of a lot of things, and we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go any further. This involves these Cubans, Hunt, and a lot of hanky-panky that we have nothing to do with ourselves. [Oglesby, 47]…When you get in—when you get in (unintelligible) people, say, ‘Look, the problem is that this will open the whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing, and the President just feels that, ah, without going into the details—don’t, don’t lie to them [the CIA] to the extent to say there is no involvement [by the White House in the burglary], but just say this is a comedy of errors, without getting into it, the President believes that it is going to open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again. And ah, because these people are plugging for (unintelligible) and that they should call the FBI in and (unintelligible) don’t go any further into this case period! ...”

It should be obvious by now that when Nixon cryptically references ‘the whole Bay of Pigs’, he is not merely uttering a crude (albeit disguised) threat against Helms—he is unconsciously providing a gloss upon the defining parapolitical dynamic of the Kennedy administration.

11:40 am—Haldeman makes arrangement for a meeting between himself and both the Director (Richard Helms) and Deputy Director (General Vernon Walters) of the CIA in the offices of Presidential advisor Erlichmann.93

92 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy War, 47-8.
93 Powers, 301.
1:00 pm—second meeting between Nixon and Haldeman. Nixon once again re-visits the Bay of Pigs.

OK, just postpone (unintelligible)…Just say (unintelligible) very bad to have this fellow Hunt, ah, he knows too damned much, if he was involved—you happen to know what? If it gets out that this is all involved, the Cuba thing would be a fiasco. It would make the CIA look bad, it’s going to make Hunt look bad, and it is likely going to blow the whole Bay of Pigs thing, which we think would be very unfortunate—both for the CIA, and for the country, at this time, and for American foreign policy. Just tell him [L. Patrick Gray, the Director of the FBI] to lay off.94

1:30—meeting of Haldeman, Erlichman, Helms, and Walters.

Haldeman then said ‘it was the President’s wish that Walters call on Acting FBI Director Patrick Gray and suggest to him that since the five suspects [McCord, Martinez, Barker, Frank Sturgis, and Virgilio Gonzalez] had been arrested that this should be sufficient and that it was not advantageous to have the enquiry pushed’…Helms said he had already discussed the investigation with Gray the day before, and had assured him the CIA was not involved and that none of the suspects were working for the Agency.

At this point Haldeman ventured the gambit [of Nixon]. ‘The President asked me to tell you this entire affair may be connected to the Bay of Pigs, and if it opens up, the Bay of Pigs may be

94 Hougan, 48.
blown…’

Helms’ reaction was immediate. He gripped the arms of his chair, leaned forward, and shouted: ‘The Bay of Pigs had nothing to do with this! I have no concern about the Bay of Pigs!’ 95

Haldeman was taken aback by the vehemence of Helms’ reaction. ‘I’m just following my instructions, Dick,’ he said. ‘This is what the President told me to relay to you.’ 96 [Powers, 302.]

2:20 pm—third meeting between Haldeman and Nixon.

Haldeman: ‘Gray called Helms and said I think we’ve run right into the middle of a covert CIA operation.’

Nixon: ‘Gray said that?’

Haldeman: ‘Yeah. And (unintelligible) said nothing we’ve done at this point and ah (unintelligible) says well it sure looks to me like it is (unintelligible) and ah, that was the end of that conversation (unintelligible) the problem is it tracks back to the Bay of Pigs and it tracks back to some

95 Presumably this is Helm’s coded reference to the CIA suspension of its own investigation of Dealey Plaza following the release of the FBI report on December 9, 1963? Kurtz, 20-1. Also of possible significance was that very soon after assuming the Presidency in 1969, Nixon demanded ‘all the facts and documents the CIA had on the Bay of Pigs, a complete report on the whole project.’ After being repeatedly stonewalled by the CIA, Nixon held ‘a long secret conversation’ with Helms in the Oval Office, after which he ordered his aides Ehrlichman and Haldeman ‘to cease and desist’ from trying to obtain the CIA files. Haldeman, 25-6.

96 Powers, 302.
other, the leads run out to people who had no in­volvement in this, except by contracts and con­nection, but it gets into areas that are liable to be realized.’97

Haldeman makes clear in his memoirs that by the end of the Watergate scandal he had come to believe that ‘the Bay of Pigs’ was Nixonesque code for JFK/DALLAS; ‘It seems that in all those Nixon references to the Bay of Pigs, he was actually referring to the Kennedy assassina­tion.’98 Offering an opinion shared by many assassina­tion investigators (Lane, Russo), Haldeman speculates that Oswald was actually a Cuban agent who killed JFK under orders from Castro as retaliation for the assassina­tion component of OPERATION MONGOOSE.

[W]hen Nixon said, ‘It’s likely to blow the whole Bay of Pigs’ he might have been reminding Helms, not so gently, of the cover-up of the CIA assassination attempts on the hero of the Bay of Pigs, Fidel Castro—a CIA operation that may have triggered the Kennedy tragedy and which Helms desperately wanted to hide.99

In Haldeman’s view, Phase II of JFK/DALLAS was really an effort by the CIA to disguise both Oswald’s own clandestine affiliations with central intelligence as well as the Agency’s wider involvement in regional assassina­tion conspiracies.

After Kennedy was killed, the CIA launched a

97 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy War, 48
98 Haldeman, 39. Of course, a somewhat more pedestrian explanation could be that Nixon was referencing the Cuba Project more generally, and the multifarious CIA and Mafia linkages and assassination plots in particular.
99 Ibid, 40.
fantastic cover-up. Many of the facts about Oswald unavoidably pointed to a Cuban connection...In a chilling parallel to their cover-up at Watergate, the CIA literally erased any connection between Kennedy’s assassination and the CIA. No mention of the Castro assassination attempt was made to the Warren Commission by CIA representatives. In fact, Counter-Intelligence Chief James Angleton of the CIA called [Deputy Director] Bill Sullivan of the FBI and rehearsed the questions they would give to the Warren Commission investigators, such as these samples:

Q. Was Oswald an agent of the CIA?

A. No.

Q. Does the CIA have any evidence showing that a conspiracy existed to assassinate Kennedy?

A. No.100

The evidence presented by Haldeman is perfectly consistent with that false-flag; proof of the collusion between the CIA and FBI highlights the underlying parapolitical continuity of both JFK/DALLAS and NIXON/WATERGATE, two singular deep events embedded within the far greater parapolitical landscape of clandestine governance.

100 Ibid, 39-40.
[ Movie Poster: Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman star as Watergate scandal journalists Bob Woodward & Carl Bernstein in Alan J. Pakula's 1976 film “All the President's Men” ]