

**Henry Kissinger, Watergate, the CIA,
and the Latin American Connection**

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If certain acts in violation of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or whether Germany does them, and we are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us.

– Robert H. Jackson, chief prosecutor for the United States at the Nuremberg Trials

The greatest danger is that conspiratorial operations abroad lead to the same process at home.

– Anthony Lewis, “The Men of Zeal.” *The New York Times*, May 24, 1973

¹ Martin Edwin Andersen first broke the story in *The Nation* in 1987 of Henry Kissinger giving a “green light” to Argentina’s far-right generals for their state terrorist dirty war. Andersen subsequently lost his job as a professor at the Pentagon’s [National Defense University](#) (NDU) for, among other disclosures, blowing the whistle on an NDU colleague from Chile who served previously as a senior official in Pinochet’s state terrorism organization. Jaime García Covarrubias later received life imprisonment for his role in three separate cases of the murders of nine unarmed people, being found guilty in 2023, the fiftieth anniversary of the far-right military coup there, in the case involving four university students and others. Andersen’s latest book, *Changing Sides: Henry Kissinger and the Nuremberg Legacy*, is due out in early 2025, the 80th anniversary of the start of the Nuremberg trials.



Meeting at Camp David to discuss the Vietnam situation. NARA—194466.tif

His century-old mortal remains were barely room temperature when an often-fawning U.S. Establishment press produced artful verbal gymnastics, even by the 21st century elite’s copyboy standards, about the death of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. As a result, though accused around the world of myriad war crimes resulting from the clandestine policies he orchestrated, his public support for vile and vicious dictatorships, and various official “green light” benedictions for violations by the U.S. and its supposed allies of the international law set down in the post-World War II Nuremberg trials, Kissinger’s larger-than-life impunity lives on to haunt the United States at home, as well as his victims and those of their communities abroad.

The headline in his *New York Intelligencer* obituary addressed that immunity, “Henry Kissinger, the Devil at the Dinner Party; His final act—after Harvard and D.C. and Cambodia—was spent at New York’s more rarified tables.” His legacy, Choire Sicha reminded, includes “dead children and the mass displacement of human beings from Bangladesh to Chile.”

Nothing cries out in the mainstream media mulling over the now-defunct Kissinger quite like the virtual absence of coverage about his own role in the much-touted but still misunderstood Watergate public corruption scandal that brought down President Richard M. Nixon. Instead, a faux legend persists, perhaps best encapsulated in a riff entitled “Dark Legacy of Latin America haunts Kissinger,” published more

than two decades ago: “For his admirers, Kissinger was the man who singlehandedly kept American foreign policy on the rails as Watergate engulfed the Nixon presidency.”

The post-mortem gulch (still not, clearly, an Establishment-admitted glitch) is a powerful dearth, not backed by evidence, and directly linked to Kissinger’s own role in what was called in the last century “America’s back yard”—Latin America. Key to missing analyses, so relevant to that Kissinger claim of engulfing teutonic singlehandedness, were his staff, sources, and methods of operation domestically and their ties to criminal wrongdoing overseas. Instead, “(h)is power grew during the turmoil of Watergate, when the politically attuned diplomat took on a role akin to co-president to the discredited Nixon,” the Associated Press noted, but did not expand upon, in the wake of the putative Nobel Peace Prize laureate’s death.

“Mr. Kissinger,” The New York Times judged, “was not involved in the Watergate affair.” Under a headline proclaiming that the deceased “Shaped Nation’s Cold War History,” The Times offered a dutiful laundry list of Kissinger’s alleged accomplishments and foreign misdeeds. Yet its Watergate mention was as misleading as it was brief, devoid of any real understanding of the domestic reach, and criminal culpability, of a man who even supporters called “paranoid,” and “conspiratorial and deceitful.” Instead, the word-smithed good and evil tango by the “Newspaper of Record” on Kissinger’s demise was eerily previewed decades earlier both in The Times reporting, and a required special optics for reading between the lines, of the tawdry death of Nelson Rockefeller, a former Vice President, one-time New York governor, fellow cheerleader for Latin American dictatorships, and Kissinger’s pre- and post-Watergate patron.

The Times did briefly note that in 1969 an “enraged” Kissinger ordered the FBI to tap the phones of his National Security Council aides to see who had tipped it off to a secret, and what was to become genocidal, carpet-bombing campaign of Cambodia, whose government was not a party to the Vietnam war. Four Kissinger aides resigned to protest the 1970 U.S. invasion there, his hand-crafted barbarity made him not only a war criminal but later helping to create, after the U.S. defeat, an even worse Indochinese holocaust. An equally furious Kissinger, it noted, purposefully fanned Nixon’s anger on the public disclosure of the classified Pentagon Papers revelations about the real U.S. role in Vietnam, something that “in his view, jeopardized his secret face-to-face diplomacy.” “If anybody leaks in this administration, I will be the one to leak,” he said,” veteran Times reporter David Sanger wrote. “And he did, prodigiously.”

The clandestine formation of a secret White House unit—The Plumbers—to surveil U.S. political opponents rounded out *The Times*' paltry domestic critique for the foreign relations guru. “The break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee by a White House team of burglars and the administration’s attempts to cover up the crime emerged from a culture of suspicion and secretiveness that many argue that he helped to foster,” Sanger wrote unobtrusively, in an obituary that otherwise gave Kissinger a pass on his role in a criminal national security conspiracy that brought down a president.

Kissinger, according to another postmortem analysis, this time in the *Washington Post*, was “angry that a ‘domestic scandal’ had ‘wrecked’ his foreign policy objectives,” as legendary *Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein noted themselves in their 1976 book *The Final Days*. The article, “Kissinger held a sobbing Nixon just before the president resigned,” claimed in retrospect that the supposedly incontrovertible *Woodstein* team had merely offered “an interesting perspective on the Watergate break-in, considering that some historians think Kissinger’s hatred of Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg sparked the whole thing.” In February 2024, the “Revisiting Watergate Key Players” summary in the *Post* still did not list Kissinger among the 24 selected by the newspaper, whose greatest “scoops” ever were arguably about the scandal, at least by Hollywood standards.

Before his death, Kissinger’s key role in Watergate appeared only fitfully in the public discourse, often lacking both crucial context and the subject’s own penchant for power-mad criminality in assessing what he did and how he got away with it.

There were important exceptions. For example, in 1976, the year of the American Bicentennial, Peter Winn, a Tufts University historian who was in Santiago three years before during the bloody far-right military coup there, wrote in *The Times* about “recent revelations” of the U.S.’s “special responsibility for the Chilean tragedy” found in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence’s report, “Covert Action in Chile, 1963–1973.” Kissinger’s handiwork in that country, Winn shadow boxed, made it “the Watergate of United States foreign policy—with its corruption of power and cover-up of the truth, its violation of the letter of our laws and the spirit of our principles.”

“Kissinger’s worst crime was apparently testifying falsely to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about his involvement in Watergate—specifically his authorization of illegal wiretaps of the phones of journalists and government officials,” David Greenberg, a Rutgers University professor of history, noted with precision in October 2015: “*Watergate was the scandal of the century, and Kissinger’s key role in it should be*

what history will remember him for most." (Italics added.) Writing again in 2022 about "Nixon's steady descent into ever-greater criminal wrongdoing," Greenberg carefully traced the beginning of the scandal:

Starting with his and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger's decision in early 1969 to secretly wiretap journalists and spy on their own staff to find out the source of leaks about Vietnam, Nixon grew increasingly comfortable with abusing the power of the presidency to punish enemies, shore up his own power and pursue his paranoid fantasies. There was the drafting of the so-called Huston Plan in 1970 to carry out political intelligence from the White House; the installation of the secret taping system in 1971; the creation of the Plumbers Unit that began committing illegal break-ins; and of course the burglaries at the Watergate complex itself...

Since the early 1970s Pulitzer Prize winning investigative reporter Seymour Hersh was hot on the trail of official Nixon and Kissinger conspiracies and other crimes, including those in Latin America. Ten years later he wrote authoritatively on the U.S. domestic scandal: "Kissinger was permitted to slide by with his half-truths and misstatements. *Only Richard Nixon, (his NSC deputy) Alexander Haig, some men around them, and a few Watergate prosecutors understood the truth: Kissinger was involved*" (Italics added).

For much of his National Security Council staff, Kissinger was not only "a hypnotic guy," but also a boss both "vicious and "outspoken" when not fawning over *his* patron inside the Oval Office, the 37th president already known as "Tricky Dick." Nixon's first Secretary of State, William Rogers, Kissinger proclaimed, "was a 'fag' who had a strange hold over the President." Secretary of Defense Mel Laird was, for the NSC leaker-in-chief, "a megalomaniac who constantly leaked anti-Kissinger stories to the press." Even Nixon was not spared Kissinger's behind-the-scenes portrayal as "a secret drunk of dubious intelligence."

Nixon's 1968 election came after the sabotaging by his own presidential campaign of crucial secret peace talks that October with North Vietnam by the outgoing U.S. administration. When he found out, President Lyndon B. Johnson (for whom the Kissinger had worked on a sensitive 1967 Vietnam War diplomatic initiative), called the diplomatic backstabbing in which the former vice president was actively involved "treason," while many experts today say was in violation of federal law. The Nixon gamble depended to a great extent on Kissinger's purposeful trafficking of insider information to Nixon about the still-secret peace parley.

Ironically, earlier that year, as an advisor for rival Republican presidential candidate Nelson Rockefeller, it was Kissinger who dubbed Nixon "the most dangerous of all the men running" for president. Even more ironically, John A. Farrell,

the historian who in 2017 published the “smoking gun” proving Nixon’s personal involvement in the scheme in which Kissinger played an essential part, told *The Times* of the clandestine political maneuver, “Potentially, this is worse than anything he did in Watergate.”

The “original sin” of Nixon’s rise to the White House, accompanied by Kissinger, is essential in understanding just how Watergate came about and what exactly was the National Security Adviser’s soon out-of-control role. It was not until 1974, with Nixon already forced from office and breaking news about the U.S. role in the 1973 overthrow of Chile’s democratically elected Socialist President Salvador Allende, did public service headlights focus on the NSC’s “40 Committee” of the five senior-most officials, usually chaired by Kissinger.

Former *New York Times* foreign correspondent Tad Szulc, whose family fled Poland to escape the clutches of Nazi Germany, was credited with breaking the 1961 story of the CIA-supported Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. In 1973, Szulc published a book about Watergate break-in organizer, E. Howard Hunt, claiming the *Compulsive Spy* (the book’s title) headed a second planned but later aborted invasion of Cuba aided by two of those who also became Watergate burglars. In September 1974, in a *New York* magazine blockbuster, “How Kissinger Runs Our ‘Other Government,’” Szulc showed the clandestine super-government 40 Committee was only “*nominally answerable to the president*” and, “in a tenuous interlock with the [NSC] and the entire U.S. intelligence-gathering apparatus, can order covert espionage and paramilitary operations around the world” (Italics added).

Kissinger’s power “*in the field of clandestine foreign policy has been unchallenged since Nixon took office,*” Szulc noted. For years he served as “*the de facto boss of the United States intelligence community, greatly cutting down the influence of the CIA in decision-making.* No such (overt and covert) power in foreign policy has ever been vested in any man, except the president, in our history.” (Italics added.)

During Watergate, the 40 Committee “*may have had links with secret domestic intelligence units, possibly including even the ‘Plumbers,’*” Szulc speculated. “One intriguing question is whether the 40 Committee—or Kissinger—may have wanted The Plumbers to help out in the covert operations against Chile. A half-dozen unexplained break-ins into the offices and homes of Chilean diplomats in Washington and New York in the spring of 1972, *just before Watergate,* have been attributed to The Plumbers, although there is no proof” (Italics added).

Based on the voluminous declassification of documentation in the subsequent half century related to Kissinger's federal employment atop the national security apparatus, it is easy to see why Szulc, the celebrated investigative reporter, seemed to gloss over his fellow refugee's real role in Watergate. Kissinger, he wrote briefly, "had had indirect dealings with the Plumbers since 1971, when he listened to an interview tape-recorded by David Young, his former aide and subsequently a Plumber, with a navy yeoman charged with secretly passing National Security Council documents to the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

The far-reaching inter-service scandal, in which the deliberate theft by the United States military command of highly-classified documents from 40 Committee chair Kissinger and (supposedly) his deputy, General Haig, was just coming into better focus in 1974, too. Together with a National Security Agency end run around Kissinger that occurred the year before (but only revealed in an authorized history in 2020), it was arguably one of the most consequential rivalries within the U.S. intelligence community now known to the public. Yet the time that Kissinger was spied on, rather than his orchestrating the intelligence community surveilling of others, was largely unappreciated for its institutional earthshaking by reporters and the public at large (and apparently still, by well-placed Establishment media obituary writers).

The similarly hugely underappreciated story concerning Kissinger aide David Young, however, is a different matter entirely. It directly relates to his boss's cover up of scandals not only about Cambodia, Chile, and Vietnam, and is also a covert saga of the soon-to-become Secretary of State's mantle of silence about his knowledge of, and role in, shady CIA-supported domestic break-ins carried out against American critics as well as other FBI and CIA state-side abuses, hush money payments, serial lying (criminal perjury), and cover ups. Without Kissinger's role and that of his direct underlings being understood, the Watergate story is more of a made-for-Hollywood tale than investigative history.

It was only in 1999 that the Washington Post reported that, according to White House taped conversations, Nixon himself claimed that The Plumbers were responsible for breaking into the Chilean Embassy in May, 1972, supposedly to make that and the Watergate break-in the month later, appear to be CIA operations related to the Agency's ongoing efforts to overthrow Allende's government. The *Post* also reported that Watergate prosecutors, who "concluded the three Cubans, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez and Felipe de Diego, had probably done the job," were not able to follow up on the information that they had at the time because the FBI reported its informer had

been “murdered by an unidentified sniper.” [Note: Sturgis, whose real name was Frank Fiorini was a non-Cuban veteran of both the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps., though up to his ears in clandestine efforts against Fidel Castro’s Cuba.] Nowhere in the *Post* piece about the “Chilean caper” was it mentioned that the head of The Plumbers was Young, who worked for Kissinger, nor what was the international significance of the Chilean embassy representing Allende’s Chile in Washington being broken into (as the NSC chief oversaw Agency destabilization of that country’s government). The failure was even more pronounced if only because by then, Woodward – who himself had covered up his own pre-Watergate military ties to Al Haig, Kissinger’s principal aide at the NSC as well as his key liaison with Plumber chief Young -- had by that time become a *Post* associate editor.

Kissinger’s Watergate

A graduate of Wheaton College, a small though historic educational institution located in the same Illinois city where Woodward was raised, Young had begun his career as a lawyer with the New York firm Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy. (Known for the firm’s ties to the Rockefeller family, as the first civilian U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, law partner John J. McCloy served as catalyst for the commuting of the sentences of nearly two dozen German Nazi war criminals sentenced to death at the Nuremberg trials. Earlier, as an assistant secretary of war during World War II, it was McCloy more than any other who wielded influence in the Allies’ determination not to bomb, for the purpose of stemming the slaughter, the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. McCloy was also the person most responsible for the imprisonment of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans, over two-thirds American citizens, in 10 camps around the country during the war, something that years later he defended as “humane.” Kissinger, whose family fled Nazi Germany before the war, later lauded McCloy as one who “heard the footsteps of God as he went through history.”) Three years later, Young became treasurer of the Rockefeller for President Campaign Committee and met with Kissinger during the latter’s key role in the New York governor’s failed effort.

With Kissinger’s ascent to the National Security Council in 1969, Young first served as one of his administrative assistants—carrying out key national security reporting duties—and, beginning in 1971, was a special assistant to him in the White House, on the payroll as an NSC staff member until 1973. Young later went to Oxford University to earn a doctoral degree in international relations; the Plumbers co-leader’s

doctorate, on White House policymaking, “kept under lock and key [...] on the ground that it contains sensitive classified information.” A *New York Times* puff piece, published appropriately enough in post-Orwell 1984, noted the never-indicted Plumber had created in England the firm Oxford Analytica, one of its key corporate sponsors being the Rockefeller family’s Chase Manhattan Bank. It was the Rockefeller bank, more than any other private financial institution, that bankrolled the neo-Nazi Argentine military dictatorship engaged in a dirty “war,” greenlighted by Kissinger, that employed Adolf Hitler’s “night and fog” doctrine, sending thousands to their clandestine deaths in concentration camps.

The Times 1984 article noted that Young was one of two people responsible for “oversee(ing) the burglary of (the Beverly Hills office of) Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, in retaliation for Mr. Ellsberg’s leaking of the Pentagon Papers, and there were accusations of other illegal activities as well.” Yet *The Times* went on to claim that Kissinger’s aide, who it identified in its opening paragraph as “one of the co-leaders of the group known as ‘the plumbers,’” nonetheless “had played only a bit part in the drama.”

While some accounts say it was an angry Nixon who created the super-secret Special Investigations Unit, it was Kissinger’s one-time domestic liaison Young, charged with covering domestic issues for the national security adviser, who as its co-chair gave it its name, The Plumbers, as well as, briefly, a sign advertising their moniker placed on the unmarked door of their top-secret den, Room 16 in the Executive Office Building (a room that reportedly, according to a key Nixon aide, literally later “vanished without a trace”.) Meant to oversee all federal agencies entrusted by law to investigate leaks, The Plumbers were the hands-on bureaucratic midwives to Watergate, as well as some its most important and most involved participants.

Young’s role was largely passed over in nearly all the media—as were critical aspects of The Plumbers’ ties to Latin America—in subsequent Watergate reporting. One of those who oversaw the Watergate break-in was not only a CIA veteran, but the Washington, D.C. public relations firm he worked for after supposedly leaving the agency, the Robert R Mullen & Co., provided “cover” for U.S. intelligence officers stationed overseas.

The Kissinger-Young story was both available and critical to understanding the context detailed in the publication by *The Times* in July 1974, (and cited extensively in the narrative below), of the far-reaching excerpts of the four volumes of evidence gathered by the House Judiciary Committee in the effort to impeach Nixon.

The House committee found that Nixon administration's illegal wiretapping, in which Kissinger's involvement was key, began in early May 1969, just four months after taking office. That was two full years before small portions of the Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force, or "Pentagon Papers," compiled mostly by Defense Department, State Department and CIA documents classified as "top secret," were widely distributed in leaks to the media.

Upon publication of a selection of the report Ellsberg, who had lectured at Kissinger's defense policy seminars at Harvard in the 1960s, stated publicly that not only had Kissinger been consulted before the task force began its work. A year before *The Times* published it, Ellsberg noted that the NSC chief told him, while meeting at the White House, that he had already read the report. Yet a *Times* article published on July 14, 1971 noted Kissinger "had been quoted last month as having said that he had been unaware of the study's existence until he saw the first installment of [the] [...] *Times* series drawn from it, on the morning of June 13." (Release of the complete report did not, in fact, occur until the 40th anniversary of its publication by *The Times*.)

The Judiciary Committee report noted that for nearly three years, at Kissinger aide Haig's request, wiretaps of government officials and journalists were never entered into the FBI indices, a legal accountability mechanism that was standard operating procedure at the time. Three government officials—two in the State Department at the ambassadorial level and one a top aide to the Secretary of Defense—were among those tapped at Haig's request. The regular reporting Kissinger received at the time about the wiretaps seemingly showed that none of those under surveillance were in fact leaking classified information.

The leaks were linked to media disclosures in May 1970 of the clandestine bombing of Cambodia, considered by many legal scholars a war crime clearly directed by Kissinger. (In his path-breaking work on role played by Haig as a virtual coup monger playing both sides inside the Nixon White House, enterprising correspondent and historian Ray Locker wrote in 2020 that the wiretaps did yield proof about one alleged leaker, an NSC staffer who earlier worked with Averell Harriman, Johnson's negotiator in the secret 1968 Paris peace talks sabotaged by Nixon and Kissinger. Perhaps worried about what the staffer might have countered with, based upon what really happened behind the scenes in the run-up to the 1968 presidential election, the normally martial Haig reportedly "quietly" told him "he had been discovered and had to leave, which he did.")

In a two-week period *after* the Pentagon Papers were published, Kissinger repeatedly met with Nixon and other top officials to discuss their impact on defense and national security and the role played, and that could be played still, by Ellsberg, the one-time Kissinger associate. Nixon demanded his staff “destroy” him, telling the White House chief of staff: “I don’t care how you do it. You can’t let the Jew steal that stuff and get away with it. You understand? People don’t trust these Eastern establishment people. [Ellsberg is] Harvard. He’s a Jew. You know, and he’s an arrogant intellectual.” (Noting years later that in his entire life he had been in a synagogue just once, Ellsberg, a former Marine Corps officer said, “I was a Jew and I am a Jew. By [Nixon’s] definition, I am 100 percent a Jew, as I would be under Hitler’s.”)

When The Plumbers unit was formed, a recently retired CIA officer, E. Howard Hunt, was put in charge under Young. A veteran of the clandestine service known as a “dirty tricks” specialist, Hunt had played a role in the military overthrow of Guatemala’s elected government in 1954, resulting in more than four decades of repression that killed tens of thousands of (mostly indigenous) civilians; was an Agency station chief in Mexico, and served as a covert CIA liaison to the Cuban exile group in Miami that launched the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion.

As shown in the Judiciary Committee report, the White House told the deputy director of the CIA, Robert Cushman, that Hunt (who once shared an office with him when the then Marine colonel was assigned to the Agency) and The Plumbers “should have pretty much carte blanche,” a benediction of liberties denied publicly by senior Nixon aides until a memorandum of conversation was produced. The 1969-71 wiretaps were said by senior White House officials to be “extremely sensitive” and copies of their secure summaries were sent to ... 40 Committee chair Kissinger.

In July 1971, Kissinger domestic affairs aide Young was made co-chair of The Plumbers. That same month Hunt met with the CIA deputy director and was provided with materials needed for voice alteration and physical disguise, as well as a new alias identification. Meanwhile The Plumbers conducted an investigation of a leak to *The Times* resulting in a story about Kissinger’s negotiations with the Soviets on arms control. They received CIA help both in getting polygraph kits and operators. At the same time, Young asked the Agency director of security to conduct a psychological profile of Ellsberg, a measure personally approved by CIA director Richard Helms. As later reported in the Agency’s *Studies of Intelligence*, about a whistleblower whose truth telling infuriated and in some ways embarrassed Kissinger:

Concerned that Ellsberg was being viewed by some in the country as a hero, the White House wanted to destroy his public image and credibility and portray him as a traitor. During his time on Kissinger's staff, Young had become familiar with the psychological profiles CIA had done on foreign leaders. He believed such a profile might be of value in painting the type of damaging picture of Ellsberg that he and the Plumbers had in mind.

In his critically hailed *Scorpions' Dance; The President, The Spymaster, and Watergate*, Jefferson Morley wrote that Young, seeking to get CIA help, "pleaded with [Agency Director Richard] Helms, stressing that the study had been given 'highest priority [...] by Kissinger and that the CIA was the only agency with such a capability.'" In August, Kissinger and Haig told other White House officials that they were in possession of the 1969-71 wiretaps summaries "identical" to those the 40 Committee chair had already received.

The House Judiciary Committee report noted that Kissinger aide Young was part of a White House discussion about whether Cuban American Bay of Pigs veterans with whom Hunt had worked should be included in the break-in of the office of Fielding, Ellsberg's psychiatrist. He was one of the two who informed a key Nixon aide that the FBI had been unable to purloin the Ellsberg files. Also in early August 1971, The Plumbers' documentation showed that in addition to its probes into Ellsberg, the Pentagon Papers, and on U.S.-Soviet arms talks (about which Young played a key supporting role to Kissinger), they were engaged in analyzing leaks, media regulations, classification and declassification systems, cancelling software contracts, and a study of polygraphs.

Two days after its completion, the CIA delivered to Young and his Plumber co-chair a psychological profile of Ellsberg, which the clandestine duo considered superficial. A day later they met with the Agency psychiatrist who did the profile to discuss its further development, again invoking Kissinger's personal interest in an effort also discussed with Nixon. By mid-August, Young was telling Hunt, among others, that due to their association with the White House, they should be absent during the Fielding break-in.

By late 1971, Hunt got from the CIA the alias identification and disguise props, as well as a camera hidden in a tobacco pouch that he had requested. After he and an associate took pictures of both the interior and exterior of Fielding's office, a CIA official met Hunt in the airport on his return from Los Angeles, got the film processed, and returned the prints to the veteran spy the same day. As a result, he was able to tell Young a break-in was feasible.

Young informed White House senior officials that The Plumbers' plan was to create a stench around the Pentagon Papers affair and create a negative picture of Ellsberg's colleagues and supporters. He received a go-ahead once he was able to convincingly argue that a surreptitious entry was doable and being traced to them avoidable. A few days before the Agency finally began to push back, the CIA deputy director sought to have Hunt controlled in his asks to Langley headquarters.

The Fielding break-in, meant to "investigate Ellsberg's habits, mental attitudes and emotional and moral problems," proved to be a failure. It was carried out on the ground by a Cuban American recruited, by Hunt, with ties to the 1961 invasion of Cuba; another who claimed he had conducted more than 350 missions to the island for the Agency; and a third who once worked for Langley and who, upon his arrest for the Watergate break-in, offered to "shed new light" about other actions, something sources close to the investigation believed might include information about the June 1972 break-in of the Chilean Embassy in Washington. CIA spymaster Hunt, deployed outside Fielding's residence, stayed in communication by walkie-talkie. Young later received photographs of the physical damage done to the doctor's office, while Hunt urged additional efforts be made to secure what they said they were not able to find.

Kissinger's rage against Ellsberg echoed the apocalyptic warning he made in 1968 about candidate Nixon; his former Pentagon colleague, he ranted, was "the most dangerous man in America." Yet his aide David Young let senior White House officials know, in a memorandum, that the prosecution of the whistleblower would not be easy. Ellsberg had given the classified information to the press, not a foreign power; the Defense Department published much the same information as Ellsberg just a few months after *The Times* broke the story, and the supposedly treasonous truth-telling disclosures, Young affirmed, did not appear to create any real national security damage.

By November 1971, the skulldugery reached a new level. CIA Director Helms wrote Young to tell him that under no circumstances should Agency involvement in the creation of the Ellsberg psychological profile be revealed. Three days later, the CIA gave an expanded Ellsberg profile to The Plumbers. The next month, Young was told that his unit should investigate the disclosures of sensitive information contained in crusading newspaper columnist Jack Anderson's behind-the-scenes (and Pulitzer Prize winning) account of the U.S. favoring the Pakistani military dictatorship in its armed conflict with India during the Bangladesh liberation war in East Pakistan, in which tens of thousands were massacred. Three years later the Washington Post reported that Hunt told some of his former CIA associates "that he was ordered in December 1971, or

January 1972, to assassinate Anderson.” A poison supposedly guaranteed to leave no traces was to be provided by a former Agency physician. The “forgotten genocide” carried out by a U.S.-supported military came the same year as Kissinger’s secret contacts with China through the Pakistani regime effectively allowed the NSC chief to initiate, using a visit to Beijing in July of that year, Nixon’s rapprochement with the People’s Republic.

As reported by the House Judiciary Committee, following Young’s Plumbers co-chair being booted from the unit in late December after refusing to authorize specific wiretaps, the Kissinger aide carried on. In the process he discovered how the most sensitive NSC documents were being purloined by a Navy yeoman acting under the orders of the Joint Chiefs of Staff liaison office. Young produced an investigative report on the scandal in January 1972, yet all of the illegal wiretaps were not terminated until June 20, 1972, three days after the second Watergate break-in of the Democratic National Committee. It was not until decades later that the real role of Haig, *Post* reporter Woodward’s former military colleague, in the internecine espionage within the NSC was revealed.

The first break-in, on May 27, 1972 and undetected, was also meant to gather political intelligence and install electronic surveillance. Two of the five who carried it out had also participated in the burglary of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist. A week after the first operation the Nixon administration filed an affidavit in court, perhaps reflecting the concerns CIA director Helms had expressed to Young, that none of Ellsberg’s conversations had been subject to electronic surveillance. Similar affidavits were filed on December 14, 1972 and February 23, 1973.

Three days after the second break-in at Watergate, Nixon told a top White House aide that he was to meet with CIA Director Helms, Deputy Director Vernon Walters (with long experience in Latin America), and John Ehrlichman, another senior-most White House political aide who was Young’s boss while the latter continued to share Plumbers information with Kissinger, often with Haig as the conduit. The reunion was to discuss concerns about possible revelations of clandestine Agency operations, and those of the Plumbers, particularly as they pertained to non-Watergate activities that had been carried out by Watergate principals.

Eight days after that meeting, the White House was told that the FBI was seeking to interview Young’s secretary, which resulted in Nixon’s White House lawyer calling the FBI deputy director to ask they postpone the meeting with her on national security grounds. On December 8, United Airlines Flight 553 out of Washington

crashed near Chicago's Midway Airport. The plane was carrying, among others, Dorothy, Howard Hunt's wife, who was also a Watergate paymistress and a former CIA staffer, as well as \$10,000 of hush money for her husband, who was facing trial the next month. Young's cashiered Plumber co-chair, Egil Krogh, was then appointed by Nixon as Undersecretary of Transportation, under whom the National Transportation Safety Board investigated the crash in 1973.

In January 1973, the long-delayed and blood-stained armistice negotiated by Nixon and Kissinger with North Vietnam took effect. At the same time the CIA coordinated with the White House to alter documentation regarding Hunt, its former spymaster, so as to blur the political chain of command. Early that same year, Nixon's White House lawyer was given documents the Agency had submitted to the Justice Department on October 24, 1972 that included photos tying Hunt to the Ellsberg break-in. Although only reported two decades later, Nixon was using his reportedly being wiretapped in 1968 at the direction of Lyndon Johnson, according to the Washington Post, "as a justification for the spying on Democrats that led to Watergate."

The chronology is key. On January 9, 1973, Nixon declared privately that "if this could be cranked up, LBJ could turn off the whole congressional investigation" of Watergate. The request for a turn off and the implicit threat to the former president were transmitted to the Texan himself at the LBJ ranch. Nixon chief of staff H.R. Haldeman's diary, which was only published in 1994, included the phrase, "LBJ got very hot and called [Cartha D.] Deke [DeLoach, the No. 3 in the FBI and its White House liaison during both presidencies] and said to him that if the Nixon people are going to play with this, that he would release \.\.\. [deleted material]."

A year after the publication of Haldeman's diary, DeLoach went on the record to explain what exactly had been deleted when the top Nixon aide's memoir was submitted to the National Security Council for publication clearance. DeLoach had had a front row seat in October 1968 concerning the nascent Vietnam War peace talks and the Nixon-Kissinger successful effort to scuttle the negotiations. About ready to publish his own book, DeLoach told the *Post* that the outsized Texan's threat on the heels of Nixon's 1972 landslide re-election was nothing less than the public disclosure of Nixon's and Kissinger's sabotage of the talks, an effort which at the time the former president called "treason." (A February 25, 1970 memorandum written to Nixon by Young associate Tom Charles Huston, "Vietnam Bombing Halt—the Chennault Affair," underscored the unease with which the White House still viewed the scandal

and the need to counter strike. Still partly sanitized, the memo specifically stated that “the LBJ-DeLoach relationship would make an interesting study in itself.”)

It was in 1967 that DeLoach received a call from LBJ’s unofficial White House chief of staff, Marvin Watson, who said the then leader of the free world had told him “in an off moment that he was now convinced there was a plot in connection with” the Kennedy assassination in Dallas. “Watson stated the president felt that [the] CIA had had something to do with this plot;” DeLoach wrote, having recorded the conversation in a memo.

Nixon’s key manservant in the 1968 Vietnam skullduggery, the calculating Kissinger, was now chair of the 40 Committee, overseeing all American covert operations for the White House, and soon to become Secretary of State. On January 22, Johnson died suddenly of a heart attack, having learned the day before that supposedly “peace was at hand in Vietnam.” In his own diary, Nixon cynically wrote about the “sadness” of his predecessor not winning a place in history for having won “peace with honor.”

On February 9, 1973, Nixon’s lawyer called the new CIA director and asked that the pack of materials that the Agency had sent to the Justice Department as part of the Watergate investigation be returned to it. Twelve days later CIA Deputy Director Walters contacted the White House lawyer and refused. Within a month Hunt began demanding a large amount of hush money, hinting that he would, if denied, “blow the lid off and tell all he knew.” It was then that Young met with his White House boss, Ehrlichman, to discuss what the CIA operative might say should Hunt be stymied in his blackmail attempt. Young later testified that his boss told him he would take possession of Plumber files regarding the Fielding break-in as they were “too sensitive and showed too much forethought.”

Less than a month later, Nixon’s White House lawyer told the original Watergate prosecutor that Hunt and others carried out the burglary of the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist. Nixon then told senior Justice Department officials that it should not investigate the burglary, coordinated with the CIA, as it was a national security matter and ordered the Watergate special prosecutor not to question, as was planned, Hunt about the crime. Meanwhile, as Seymour Hersh nearly a decade later published in *The Atlantic*, information from a private journal of an unnamed Kissinger aide from the time noted that, “Haig was directly receiving progress reports on the plumbers’ activities from David Young. *Kissinger was ‘worried,’* the journal noted in an entry dated March 15, 1973, *‘concerning the plumbers’ work’*” (Italics added).

On April 30, 1973, two weeks after acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray resigned while admitting he destroyed evidence in the Watergate scandal, Young was told by the senior White House political operative who was his boss that his files should be turned over to Nixon, as the Ellsberg operation was a national security matter. The man Kissinger brought into the White House, and whose Plumbers carried out operations of specific interest to the NSC chief, was also told that he should refuse to answer any questions on national security grounds and executive privilege.

In addition to preparing the Ellsberg psychological profile and giving Hunt technical support, from July 1971 to July 1972, The Plumbers and their White House patrons sought to have the CIA assist them in several international areas. Those, according to a 2022 article in the CIA's professional journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, included turning over sensitive files relating to the Bay of Pigs invasion and the 1963 ouster and assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem (in order to attack the Democrats); ordering the acting FBI director to squelch the bureau's Watergate-related investigation in Mexico, where it was pursuing leads that would connect the burglars' money with Republican campaign funds; and supplying the Watergate burglars unvouchered CIA funds. (A September 29, 1968 memo to Nixon from Rose Mary Woods, his long-time personal secretary later involved in the Watergate scandal due to her intimate knowledge of the goings on, noted that Winston Scott, the Mexico station chief she identified as the CIA's "Inspector General," "claims to be supporting [Nixon]" and "has between three and five million dollars to play with.")

On July 18, 1973, Young found himself before the House Armed Service Committee's special Intelligence subcommittee investigating the "CIA Watergate affair." After being sworn in, his lawyer told the committee that Young would invoke the Fifth Amendment in order to be able to remain silent on possibly self-incriminating questions. Young specifically invoked the Fifth after being questioned as to how long he was employed by Kissinger.

Asked what his job responsibilities were while working for the NSC chief, Young again brandished his right to remain silent and to not incriminate himself. He also refused to answer questions about Plumber liaisons both with the CIA and the FBI, whether he had information about Ellsberg allegedly planning to leak the Pentagon Papers to the embassy of a government hostile to the United States, and Hunt's continuing post-employment contacts with the Agency. Perhaps most importantly, the

Plumber declined to answer whether, “Dr. Kissinger, for whom you worked, [was] involved in any way with your contacts with the CIA?”

Two months earlier the by-then former CIA Director Helms told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in open session that Young had told him that Kissinger, 40 Committee chair, supported his request that the CIA prepare the Ellsberg profile. Less than two months after Young refused to comment before the intelligence subcommittee, the democratically-elected government of Chilean President Allende was overthrown in a military coup lead by a man who later fomented international terrorism, even in the U.S. capital, yet kept Kissinger close.

The thin-skinned (even his deputy Haig said privately that the NSC chief was “paranoid”) Kissinger knew that the 1968 scandal did not die with his former boss, LBJ. There were too many witnesses, some now facing federal prosecution in ever expanding Watergate swamp, and too much documentation. Six months later Johnson’s voice returned from the dead, in an Atlantic article written by a former White House speech writer, entitled appropriately enough, “The Last Days of the President: LBJ in Retirement.” In it, Johnson said that, upon taking office, he found that the government “had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean.” What Kissinger and Haig had to worry about was that veterans of Murder Inc. were intimately involved in the Watergate scandal and, as became clearer later, were part of a community engaged in terrorism at home and abroad.

Despite the gems contained in House Judiciary Committee report, Young’s role in Watergate and his continued service for Kissinger up to and including 1973, remained out of focus until it was resuscitated in 1977, in a fulsome defense of Nixon (*It Didn’t Start With Watergate*) by a no-holds-barred rightwing journalist, Victor Lasky. It was only in 1982 that Sy Hersh was able to offer a more nuanced account of Young’s Plumber past (including remaining on Kissinger’s NSC staff until at least mid-March 1973), in an advance of the publication of *The Price of Power; Kissinger in the Nixon White House*.

Had it been published before Nixon’s resignation and pardon, and Kissinger’s impunity having already extended over three presidencies, the chilling tale and its clandestine trail would have had even greater and more damning public service impact. However, with the passage of time and Ronald Reagan’s election as president, public interest had already waned, with the real role played by Kissinger’s former top aide (and by then himself Secretary of State), Al Haig, in the Nixon scandals, yet to be fully laid out.

The Bay of Pigs Remastered

“I can’t help seeing the whole Watergate affair as a repetition of the Bay of Pigs,” Eugenio Martínez, one of the Watergate burglars, would say in 1974. “The invasion was a fiasco for the United States and a tragedy for the Cubans. All of the agencies of the U.S. government were involved, and they carried out their plans in so ill a manner...” The way Martínez and his anti-Castro colleagues conducted the burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg’s doctor, he noted, “was nothing new [...] They teach you that they are going to disavow you. The Company [CIA] teaches you to accept those things as the efficient way to work. And we were grateful. Otherwise we wouldn’t have had any help at all.” From 1963 to 1971 a full-time boat captain referred to in CIA cable traffic as AMSNAP3, Martínez was on a singular mission, carrying out hundreds of infiltration, sabotage and terrorism missions to his native Cuba. Four of the seven Watergate burglars had worked for or collaborated with the Agency in its clandestine operations to overthrow and/or kill Castro. A fifth, John McCord, had been deputy chief of the Security Research Staff of the CIA Office of Security.

McCord and Hunt, the latter who went from the clandestine debacle of Cuba operations to being the covert action chief of the Domestic Contacts Division, were personally close to Helms. Those who Langley tried desperately to portray as all *former* Agency employees were the point of the lance in one of the most devastating series of domestic political crimes in American history. To those with whom he was to carry out the burglary of the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, Hunt claimed “there was a job, a national security job dealing with a traitor of this country who had given papers to the Russian Embassy. He said they were forming a group with the CIA, the FBI, and all the agencies, and that it was to be directed from t with jurisdiction to operate where all the others did not fit.” Hunt went out of his way to impress upon his fellow burglars the importance of his White House position. “One time he called” another of the Plumbers “and told him the President was about to mine Haiphong Harbor” in North Vietnam; “It was very impressive to us when the announcement of the mining was made several days later.” Two Plumbers later turned up uninvited to a Cuban exile meeting in which a Miami demonstration was being planned in support of the Haiphong mining.

The CIA charter specifically prohibits domestic operations. In both the Ellsberg and Watergate cases Agency assets were not only used but their whereabouts known at the highest levels at Langley. Martínez regularly kept his Agency case officer in the loop about his work as a Plumber. He knew how their work was financed in the

form of checks from Mexican banks to be cashed for “operational money.” He also knew that after the second break-in at the Watergate, one was planned for the headquarters of Democratic presidential candidate and World War II hero George McGovern. Yet four decades after the Watergate break-in, respected intelligence historian Morley remained able to write, “We still don’t know who ordered the burglary or why.”

The Kissinger Backstory

Upon Kissinger’s death, Sy Hersh wrote taxatively on his manipulation of the mainstream media. In “Kissinger, Me, and the Lies of the Master,” Hersh noted that his 1983 bestseller, *The Price of Power*, focused on the “manipulating and dissembling” diplomat, was a hit in terms of traditional measures—sales, paid speeches, and publicity. However, the book, he noted, “did little to diminish the mainstream press’s intense love affair with all things Henry. The obituaries that followed his death [...] were as fawning as the coverage when he lied and manipulated his way to fame while in office.” “Forget about my tome,” Hersh added,

if you want the deepest insights into the most deadly of Nixon and Kissinger’s scheming: in 2013, Gary Bass, a professor at Princeton [...] published *The Blood Telegram*, a focused account of the mass murder that Nixon and Kissinger made inevitable in 1971 in what was then known as East Pakistan, with only the slightest acknowledgement by the international media.

Hersh went on to talk about his work and Kissinger’s shadow at the Washington bureau of *The Times*.

I learned that around 5pm [two hours before the pre-cable television newspaper deadline] on days when there were stories to be written about war or disarmament—Kissinger’s wheelhouse—the bureau chief’s secretary would tell my colleague [*The Times*’ main foreign policy reporter] that ‘Henry’ was on the phone with the bureau chief and would soon call him,

leading him to scramble to write what “would invariably be the lead story in the next morning’s newspaper.” The reporter later told Hersh that he would never cite Kissinger by name, but rather only quoted “senior Administration officials”. Hersh asked the otherwise distinguished reporter if he would (as taught in Journalism 101), seek confirmation of the scoop from a second source, in this case “by calling and conferring on background with William Rogers, the secretary of state, or Melvin Laird, the secretary of defense.”

“‘Of course not,’ my colleague told me, ‘If I did that, Henry would no longer deal with us.’” [In the early 1980s the author of this piece worked at *The Times*

Washington bureau as a news assistant together with Kissinger obituary writer Sanger; the situation with the now-private sector Kissinger Hersh described had not changed, even after (or perhaps especially) after Watergate.]

Having already won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the My Lai massacre, a 1968 mass killing by U.S. soldiers of as many as 500 unarmed villagers in Vietnam, Hersh was the object of Kissinger's attempted bureaucratic seduction. When the two finally met in person, in flattering Hersh Kissinger went so far as to suggest that the former's reporting was better than that he received from the U.S. intelligence community.

Over the next few years Kissinger continued to take my calls, with the proviso that all of our conversations must be, as he once said, "off off the record." I was not allowed to quote him by name and learned years later that I was the only one on our phone calls who played by the rules. An academic doing research on Kissinger told me that my allegedly private chats with the man were transcribed within hours—he had obtained copies through the Freedom of Information Act—and made available to Kissinger or his longtime aide, Army General Alexander Haig.

In the spring of 1973 Hersh scored another scoop when a senior FBI official leaked copies of the 14 highly classified FBI wiretap authorizations signed by master leaker Kissinger, as well as two signed by others. "With Nixon on the ropes, Kissinger was the go-to guy on all foreign policy issues," Hersh wrote half a century later, "including a crisis then emerging in the Middle East." He called Kissinger, whose "immediate response was a total denial and anger at being accused of such police state tactics. Then came a non-unexpected call saying that he had had it with constantly being maligned and was going to resign."

As the 7 pm news desk deadline approached, Hersh received a call from Al Haig:

"Seymour,' he said, which got my attention—those who knew me, including Al, called me Sy—and said the following words, which I will never forget: 'Do you believe that Henry Kissinger, a Jewish refugee from Germany who lost thirteen members of his family to the Nazis, could engage in police state tactics such as wiretapping his own aides? If there is any doubt, you owe it to yourself and your beliefs and your nation to give us one day to prove your story is wrong.' [...] The story ran on the front page the next morning, and Kissinger survived, as I was sure he would. *He'd have to be caught with a knife in his hand, blood dripping from it, and the body still twitching to ever suffer consequences for his actions.*" (Italics added.)

Murder Inc. revisited

Much is made in the historical literature about former Vice President Nixon's abhorrence with the Castro takeover in Cuba. Less is found about the role played by then-U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Robert C. Hill, later a 1968 election co-conspirator and finally, in 1977 a behind-the-scenes whistleblower on Kissinger's green light to Argentina's murderous military regime. For at least two years prior to Castro's sweeping into Havana, Hill had been sounding the alarm about the insurgent's connections with Moscow but was unheard in President Dwight Eisenhower's State Department run by CIA Director Allen Dulles' brother.

The ill-fated CIA-run Bay of Pigs invasion was a humiliating setback that was the brainchild of Nixon (in charge of the early operations planning) as well as others. In the spring of 1960, when arriving in Washington to join the Cuba project, Hunt met with future General, and Deputy CIA Director, Cushman, then military aide to Nixon, who told him the vice president was the White House project action officer. The subsequent fiasco needs to be seen in that light, in order to understand the sense of loyalty and the fierce ideological drive fueling anti-Castro veterans willing to go to any length, commit any crime, and to hold at bay or in their gunsights anyone with whom they disagreed.

In defeat, Bay of Pigs veterans found succor in the Pentagon and in the Agency, their link with the latter being none other than Watergate burglar James McCord. It was Plumber Bernard Barker, World War II prisoner of war, former member of the Fulgencio Batista Cuban dictatorship's secret police, clandestine CIA operative, and co-organizer of the Bay of Pigs operation, who smuggled Manuel Artime, Agency-designated chief civilian commander of the 1961 invasion, out of Cuba the year before. Howard Hunt, Agency representative to and coordinator with the Cuban Revolutionary Council in Miami for the invasion, shared an apartment with Artime, who was the godfather of one of the American's children. Frank Fiorini (aka Frank Sturgis) first fought with Castro as a soldier of fortune before switching sides and participating in the Bay of Pigs and subsequent armed attacks inside Cuba. Castro himself called Sturgis, who almost killed him, "the most dangerous CIA agent." Eugenio Martínez, the CIA undercover operative who infiltrated Cuba hundreds of times on Agency missions to plant or extract anti-Castro agents, was the second person pardoned for his role in the Watergate scandal, Nixon having been the first. It was Martínez, part of the Brigade 2506 force battered on clean beaches during the failed seaborne invasion, who wrote later that Watergate was a "repetition of the Bay of Pigs."

El Padrino Artime was the chief plotter of a second invasion of Cuba, which also failed and for which Hunt was assigned to coordinate and that involved Barker and McCord as well. In addition, Artime was tied to various anti-Castro plots hatched in Central America. In November 1964, the *Miami Herald* published an article citing media sources that maintained that Cuban exiles in Central America claimed to have “a four-ship navy, a small air force, and 200 men trained as commandos.” The FBI noted that “different Cuban exile leaders continue to claim that (Artime and his organization) are making a living off the Cuban revolutionary activities, are engaged in smuggling instead of anti-Communist warfare, and are misappropriating funds designed for command and infiltration activity against” the Castro regime.

As a Plumber, in 1971 Hunt sought to recruit Artime to assassinate Panama’s military president Omar Torrijos after Nixon’s reelection as a result of his independent stand regarding drug trafficking (for his part, Nixon wanted to spend \$100 million on a secret program to kidnap and eliminate drug traffickers) and on Panama Canal negotiations. While never carried out, when Panamanian officials got wind of the plot the canal talks ground to a near halt. In February 1973, Artime, once known as “the golden boy of the CIA,” helped to distribute hush money to the lawyers and families of Barker and three other Watergate defendants who faced legal and financial ruin, Barker, Martínez, and Sturgis having worked for or with the Agency.

Civil-military impunity

Nixon was finally forced from office as a Watergate unindicted co-conspirator. After addressing the nation in a televised speech on the evening of August 8, 1974, detailing his intention to resign, he did so the next day. It was White House chief of staff Haig who presented the resignation letter to him to sign. Addressed to the Secretary of State, Kissinger initialed it at 11:35 a.m. on August 9th.

One month later, on September 8, the new President Gerald Ford, a one-time FBI informant as a member of the Warren Commission investigating President Kennedy’s assassination, issued a full pardon to Nixon for any offenses he “has committed or may have committed.” Ford made the promise to secretly inform the Bureau to Assistant Director DeLoach just two weeks after Kennedy was murdered in Dallas. At the time and later in his memoirs Ford denied that there had been a “deal” to trade Nixon’s resignation for the pardon.

The day before Ford assumed the presidency, he announced that Kissinger would continue on as Secretary of State. For a short time, Haig would stay on as White

House chief of staff. As the Washington Post later reported, eight days before Ford became president, Haig had raised the possibility of an “agreement” that Nixon would resign if Ford gave him a pardon, in other words, a quid pro quo. A senior Ford aide called the proposal a “monstrous impropriety.” For a while, Ford’s decision ignited a firestorm around Nixon and the never-elected president’s ability to lead. “No one could believe it,” when Ford pardoned Nixon, the New York Times reported. His national poll numbers plummeting, Ford said he sought to unite a divided nation. For many, the move was the defining act of the “accidental” president.

Watergate, however, did begin to recede into the background, as 1974 and 1975 were accompanied by a chorus of press revelations about shocking government misdeeds going beyond official lying on Vietnam. In December 1974, Sy Hersh filed another blockbuster, “Huge CIA Operation Reported in U.S. Against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents in Nixon Years,”

An extensive investigation by *The New York Times* has established that intelligence files on at least 10,000 American citizens were maintained by a special unit of the C.I.A. that was reporting directly to Richard Helms, then the Director of Central Intelligence [...] Under the 1947 act setting up the C.I.A., the agency was forbidden to have “police, subpoena, law enforcement powers or internal security functions” inside the United States. Those responsibilities fall to the F.B.I., which maintains a special internal security unit to deal with foreign intelligence threats [...] The information about the C.I.A. came as the Senate Armed Services Committee issued a report today condemning the Pentagon for spying on the White House National Security Council.

By early 1975 the U.S. Senate created a select committee to investigate federal intelligence operations and determine “the extent, if any, to which illegal, improper, or unethical activities were engaged in by any agency of the Federal government.” Known as the Church Committee, for its chairman, Idaho Senator Frank Church, it built upon the work of a special committee he co-chaired to critically examine Executive Branch consolidation of power during the Cold War.

With an unprecedented access to non-public materials, the Church Committee’s perhaps best-known report on the CIA’s so-called “Family Jewels,” traced a pattern of gross misdeeds going back to President Eisenhower’s administration. Together with parallel investigations, there was now a blueprint of the internal workings of domestic, foreign and military intelligence programs. Church Committee probes surfaced damning information about attempted assassinations of foreign heads of state, the CIA recruitment of journalists to spread propaganda through the media, Agency covert operations in Chile, and much more. The Church Committee proved the need

for Congress to have greater access to classified information and thus exercise more effective ongoing oversight of U.S. intelligence agencies. Though a committee had been previously established for that purpose, as Church himself noted, “The trouble is, the watchdog committee never really watched the dog.”

In 1977, as a result of earlier covert operations in Chile and due to information uncovered two years earlier by the Church Committee hearings, Richard Helms became the only director of the CIA to ever convicted of lying to Congress. He received a two-year suspended sentence and a \$2,000 fine. Helms had been key to the first publication of a conspiracy theory about President Kennedy’s assassination. One year into the presidency of Jimmy Carter, federal judge Barrington Parker ruled in a case that focused on CIA involvement in the 1970 botched kidnapping and assassination of Chilean democratic General Schneider:

If public officials embark deliberately on a course to disobey and ignore the laws of our land because of some misguided and ill-conceived notion and belief that there are earlier commitments and considerations which they must first observe, the future of our country is in jeopardy. There are those employed in the intelligence security community who feel that they have a license to operate freely outside the dictates of the law and otherwise to orchestrate as they see fit.

Few, however, appeared to take note of who in particular had escaped punishment for the most wanton misdeeds in the Nixon Administration. After all was said and done, critical questions remain: Was the CIA really in the dark about the role played by Nixon and Kissinger in the 1968 scandal? Where did the Agency believe its interests, and those of the nation, lay? In a war across Indochina, how was it that no one from Langley seemed concerned enough, patriotic enough, to make a call to Congress about a conspiracy so foul that a sitting President called it treason?

Gerald Ford, who called Kissinger a “super secretary of state,” added the caveat (published only after his death), with “the thinnest skin of any public figure I ever knew [...] Henry in his mind never made a mistake, so whatever policies there were that he implemented in retrospect he would defend.” Ford said Kissinger routinely would threaten to resign after receiving critical press coverage, and Ford would literally have to hold his hand and tell him, “Now, Henry, you’ve got the nation’s future in your hands and you can’t leave us now.” “I often thought, maybe I should say: ‘Okay, Henry. Goodbye,’” Ford said with a laugh.

Kissinger hagiographers often seek to tie his alleged greatness (often without mention of the 1968 election scandal) to the fact that he worked with Kennedy and

Johnson, as well as Nixon and Ford. However, Kissinger, a part-time adviser in the Kennedy Administration, was denied a permanent appointment when the president dismissed him as “ponderous and long-winded;” not, as his apologists claim, the victim of administrative jockeying by his one-time Harvard superior and Kennedy’s own national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy.

As the overall head of national security policy under Nixon, Kissinger had a deep reach into the intelligence community. One of the close advisers he brought on at the NSC went on to lead The Plumbers, carrying out clandestine and arguably illegal acts that were of Kissinger’s personal and professional interest. It was that same aide, who stayed on the NSC payroll until he left government service, who kept Haig, Kissinger’s No. 2, apprised of The Plumbers’ actions throughout its existence. Lyndon Johnson not only knew of Kissinger’s complicity in the 1968 election scandal; his call from the grave about Murder, Inc., was one of particular concern for those acting internationally on the Nixon national security advisor’s behalf.

Sy Hersh got a sample of Haig’s odd but purposeful invocation of Kissinger and his family’s fleeing from Nazi Germany to push back against his reporting. Hersh was not alone, as Haig made that argument to others as well. Well-placed to monitor Kissinger’s illegality, Hersh came to believe that Kissinger should have been prosecuted for his involvement in Watergate.

As the scandal that brought down a president unfolded, a second special prosecutor in Watergate was appointed on November 1, 1973. Leon Jaworski, a pre-Nuremberg prosecutor of Nazi war criminals and former lawyer for Vice President Johnson, held the position until after Nixon’s resignation. Key negotiations over Nixon’s ouster were held with Haig, Kissinger’s former No. 2 and by then the presidential chief of staff. Given Jaworski’s frequent, erroneous, billing as a “prosecutor in the 1945-46 Nuremberg trials,” it is hard to believe that Haig did not make the same case as he did with Hersh to keep Kissinger (and himself) unexamined.

As one of the highest-ranking keepers of national secrets, one of Jaworski’s already grossest professional faults, one that had remained out of public consciousness but lodged in U.S. Army court files, was certainly available to those doing background checks in the Watergate era—and certainly to the U.S. Army’s youngest four-star general, Al Haig.

A Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society report, “How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II”, explains:

During World War II, more than 20,000 soldiers were stationed at, or passed through, Seattle's Fort Lawton (now Discovery Park). On August 14, 1944, a brief scuffle between a Black enlisted man and an Italian prisoner of war quickly escalated into a bloody riot. Sometime that night, Private Guglielmo Olivotto was murdered, lynched with a rope attached to an obstacle course. After months of investigation, JAG Col. Leon Jaworski (later of Watergate fame) brought charges against 43 African American soldiers, the only time in American history that Black men have stood trial charged with a mob lynching. The largest and longest Army court-martial of the war ended with the conviction of 28 soldiers for rioting, and of 3 of those soldiers for the killing of Private Olivotto.

In 1986, journalist Jack Hamann produced a documentary about the riot, lynching and trial. Years later, Hamann and his wife, Leslie, uncovered previously classified documents that raised alarming questions about Jaworski's prosecution. The publication of their 2005 book, *On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II*, launched investigations by the US Congress and by the US Army. The book's many disclosures ultimately prompted the Army to set aside all convictions, to overturn the soldiers' dishonorable discharges, and to issue formal apologies. Congress authorized distribution of back pay to the surviving veterans and to the families of those who were no longer living.

Writing in 1976, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., a former Chief of Naval Operations, noted in his book *On Watch*. ““the deliberate, systematic and, unfortunately, extremely successful efforts of the President, Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig and a few subordinate members of their inner circle to conceal, sometimes by simple silence, sometimes by deceit, their real policies about the most critical matters of national security.” In March of that year, *New York Times* reported the memoir included specific criticism in which “Mr. Kissinger is depicted as suspicious of General Haig, who Admiral Zumwalt asserts, was involved in Watergate ‘more than Kissinger.’”

A West Point graduate who by the time of Zumwalt's publication was Ford's NATO commander in Europe, Haig came to call himself “the poor man's Kissinger.” (Ironically, West Point's Cadet Honor Code stipulates that “A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.” Formalized in the 1920s, the Code came out of a 19th century grass roots Cadet movement to create rules for enforcing honesty among its ranks. Later gross violations of the Code by West Point graduates include efforts to protect and promote murderous Pinochet minions and Argentine dirty “war” mavens ensconced in the Pentagon's own National Defense University as late as a decade ago.)

Haig's real role, and his own relationship with The Plumbers, circles back to what happened after the calamitous Bay of Pigs. The story comes from inside the CIA itself.

Don Bohning became a reporter for the *Miami Herald* in 1959, and five years later became a foreign correspondent in a paper considered an information gateway to Latin America. On August 21, 1967, he received from the CIA his Provisional Covert Security Approval, “for use as a confidential informant with natural access to information about news companies and personalities.” Following Haig’s death, Bohning wrote a story, “Al Haig’s Cuban Odyssey with the Kennedys.” ‘

“In Haig’s case, much of the attention focused on his role in the administrations of two Republican presidents, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan,” Bohning wrote. “Important as that role was, for South Florida’s Cuban exile community it wasn’t nearly as important as Haig’s earlier role dealing with Cuba in the Democratic administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.”

Haig first became involved in Cuba in February 1963, Bohning wrote, shortly after Kennedy began to pull back on covert action programs against the Castro government following the missile crisis the October before. A month later, Kennedy formally designated the second in command of Brigade 2506, Erneido Oliva, as its official representative, after the release in December 1962 of the 1,113 anti-Castro fighters capture at the Bay of Pigs. Haig was then made Oliva’s Pentagon liaison.

Bohning cited an overlooked section of Haig’s autobiography, *Inner Circles*, in which he claimed his new job, “acting in loco parentis to the rescued Cubans,” was to ensure that Kennedy’s promise that every returned detainee would get a new start in the United States. With the implementation of a new covert program against Castro Haig began to play an even more important role in an effort about which Oliva and Artime were given key briefings:

‘The two plans were supposed to mesh,’ said Oliva. ‘What Artime was doing and what Oliva was doing were supposed to mesh [...] the plans were that at a given time, when Artime’s operation gets stronger against Castro, and along with the people inside Cuba, then my officers will get together with the enlisted personnel at Fort Jackson [South Carolina] and organize a unit.

Haig also had a hand in Artime’s covert operation run out of Central America, adding that ‘my nose told me that I didn’t know it all. And that sort of concerned me because I felt I shouldn’t really get associated with something I really didn’t know what was happening and yet bear some measure of responsibility for it. So I was very pleased when the program was terminated [...] because it wasn’t accomplishing the results and [...] if it became public it would have worked against the policies on Cuba.’ (Italics added.)

The plan was shut down by Johnson shortly after Kennedy’s assassination.

During Nixon's presidency, Haig served under Kissinger and was the most telling liaison between the NSC and the Kissinger staffer who ran The Plumbers, a unit stocked with anti-Castro Cubans. As Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan Haig was singularly adamant about launching a military attack against Castro's Cuba. (Seeking to have his nomination confirmed by the United States Senate, the self-described 'poor man's Kissinger' by the United States Senate brandished a letter of high praise from none other than his supposed one-time Watergate nemesis Leon Jaworski.) Speaking at an NSC meeting that Reagan attended, the man who worked with Artime in Central America declared, "you just give me the word and I'll turn that fucking island into a parking lot."

According to Kissinger biographer Walter Issacson, his subject had the unique "ability to see the relationships between different events and to conceptualize patterns. He sensed how an action in one corner of the world would reverberate in another, how the application of power in one place would ripple elsewhere." Forty years after *1984*, it is time such an ability is applied to the role played in Watergate by Kissinger and his associates. The world is still watching.