

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

A copy of this memorandum with the book itself has been sent both to the IG and the Legislative Counsel.

WALTER PEORZHELMER

31 May 1974

(DATE)

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FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : A Piece of Tape by James W. McCord, Jr.

1. James W. McCord, Jr. has just published a book entitled A Piece of Tape: The Watergate Story: Fact and Fiction. The publisher of this \$3.95 paperback is Washington Media Services, Ltd., which is evidently McCord's own publishing outlet. It is not a well-written book; it is badly edited and repetitious. McCord advised the CIA General Counsel that he was aware of his legal obligations to CIA regarding disclosure of classified information and that there would be no such disclosures. He is true to his word.

2. The first part of the book, running some 80 pages, is McCord's account of what happened in "Watergate" insofar as he was personally concerned. In this section, he makes very clear that several people tried to fob off the Watergate break-in as a CIA operation. He vehemently denies any CIA involvement and turned down those who urged him to take this line. He also mentions (p. 43) the letter he sent to CIA warning them about these ploys. McCord then goes on to relate the attempts of his own lawyers and others to raise the "CIA defense," which he rejected. Overall, he puts the blame on the President for initiating the scheme to get the CIA "enmeshed." He is also critical of Senator Baker's role (pp. 78-79).

3. Part II of McCord's book is a digest of major testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee and other relevant statements keyed to the actual dates as they occurred. Thus, for example, under June 22, 1972, he writes:

"HELMS: He assured Gray today that the CIA had no involvement. 'The Agency had nothing to do with the Watergate break-in,' he advised Gray."

On the same date McCord lists:

"GRAY: He called Director of CIA Helms and asked if the Watergate operation was a CIA operation, and Helms responded that there was no CIA involvement...At 6:30 p.m. Gray met with Dean...Gray believes it likely that he told Dean of his earlier conversation...'since Helms informed me that there was no CIA involvement.' "

Part II is by no means confined to CIA, but rather covers all aspects of the Watergate break-in, the cover-up, and who-struck-John.

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4. Part III is a summation of all that has gone before, and Chapter 47 (p. 217), Chapter 48 (p. 221), and Chapter 54 (p. 229) are entitled "The Illegal Misuse of CIA," I, II, III, respectively. Again this is mostly taken from the testimony. The first two of these chapters cover the Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Helms, Walters meetings and the meetings with Gray. At page 221, McCord notes that, according to Dean, Mardian raised the proposition that CIA could take care of the entire Watergate matter and the legal fees, and that Mitchell suggested that this be explored with Haldeman and Ehrlichman. The third chapter on "The Illegal Misuse of CIA" involves the so called "CIA Defense." However, the mentions of CIA are not confined to these three chapters of Part III, but occur throughout.

5. I do not wish to imply, by my comments above, that McCord's book turns only on CIA. Actually that is a comparatively small proportion. McCord strongly supports the fact of CIA's non-involvement in Watergate, and that Watergate was not a CIA operation. However, McCord is the central figure by and large in much of the book.

6. One recalls that the group which broke into the DNC in the Watergate office building had taped the stairwell doors; that a guard found the taped doors and untaped them; that a conscious decision was made to retape them and proceed with the operation. It is of interest to note that McCord blames himself for not untaping the door behind them once they had entered (p. 33). Of such tapes is history made. It is also interesting to note that in March 1974 McCord filed a Petition to Congress for the impeachment of the President.

WALTER PFORZHEIMER
Curator
Historical Intelligence Collection

