

E. Howard Hunt Biography

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Biography

E. Howard Hunt was a major figure in the Watergate scandal that destroyed the presidency of Richard M. Nixon. Hunt, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer as well as a prolific fiction writer, coordinated the White House "Plumbers" unit that used covert means to obtain information about political enemies. Hunt was born on October 19, 1918 in Hamburg, New York. He graduated from Brown University in 1940 and served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II. After the war he dabbled as a screenwriter. He joined the newly formed CIA in 1948 and became involved in covert operations in Central and South America. Hunt helped overthrow the democratically elected left-wing government of Guatemala in 1954, and after Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba in 1959, Hunt's focus shifted to this nation. Because of his connections to anti-Castro exile groups in Florida, Hunt served as planning director for the 1961 invasion of Cuba by exile groups. The Bay of Pigs invasion proved to be a disaster for the invaders, but Hunt maintained his connections during the 1960s.

Hunt was brought into the White House in 1971 and soon was in charge of assembling the "Plumbers," which sought to stop government leaks after defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to the press. Hunt organized the bugging of the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate as well as a break in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Hunt was eventually convicted of burglary, conspiracy and wiretapping. He served 33 months in prison. His arrest linked the White House to the Watergate burglary and led to numerous convictions of other aides and Nixon's resignation in 1974. After his release, Hunt concentrated on writing spy novels.