

= Operation Sandwedge =

Operation Sandwedge was a proposed clandestine intelligence @-@ gathering operation against the political enemies of the Richard Nixon presidential administration . The proposals were put together by H. R. Haldeman , John Ehrlichman and Jack Caulfield in 1971 . Caulfield , a former police officer , created a plan to target the Democratic Party and the anti @-@ Vietnam War movement , inspired by what he believed to be the Democratic Party 's employment of a private investigation firm .

The operation was planned to help Nixon 's 1972 re @-@ election campaign . Operation Sandwedge included proposed surveillance of Nixon 's enemies to gather information on their financial status and sexual activities , to be carried out through illegal black bag operations .

Control of Sandwedge was passed to G. Gordon Liddy , who abandoned it in favor of a strategy of his own devising , Operation Gemstone , which detailed a plan to break into Democratic Party offices in the Watergate complex . Liddy 's plan eventually led to the downfall of Nixon 's presidency , which Caulfield believed would have been avoided had Sandwedge been acted upon .

= = Background = =

In 1968 , Richard Nixon , the United States Republican Party nominee , won the presidential election , narrowly defeating Democrat Hubert Humphrey by seven @-@ tenths of a percent of the popular vote . Nixon appointed H. R. Haldeman as his Chief of Staff ; this position granted Haldeman a relatively large degree of control over the activities of the presidential administration . Haldeman had first worked for Nixon in 1956 , during Nixon 's successful bid for the vice @-@ presidency under Dwight D. Eisenhower .

By 1971 , Nixon 's staff were receiving a cursory intelligence report from Haldeman 's assistant , Gordon C. Strachan ; Strachan 's reports essentially collated information about political rallies and campaign groups that had been already been gathered by the police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation . Prior to this , Nixon 's initial election bid had already involved the planting of rumours and false information about his opponents as a dedicated strategy ; these tactics had been dubbed " political hardball " by Nixon 's opposition researcher Pat Buchanan . In August of 1971 , Strachan had convinced Jeb Stuart Magruder , a member of the Committee for the Re @-@ Election of the President ( CRP ) ? the campaign group for Nixon 's re @-@ election bid ? to infiltrate the office of Edmund Muskie . Muskie was a Democratic senator who had been Humphrey 's 1968 vice @-@ presidential candidate , and was a front @-@ runner for his party 's presidential bid for the 1972 campaign .

= = Inception = =

In late 1971 , John Dean , the White House Counsel , pushed to expand the existing intelligence program ahead of the 1972 re @-@ election campaign . Dean delegated the task to Jack Caulfield , a member of his staff who was a former New York police officer . According to Dean , Caulfield himself was interested in work outside of politics ; he intended to create a private security company , and felt that if the Nixon cabinet were an early client , it would lead to lucrative future clients within the private sector . Fred Emery , a journalist for The Times and BBC , refutes this , claiming in his book Watergate : The Corruption & Fall of Richard Nixon that the idea of a private sector security firm was simply a front for a committed campaign of surveillance working Nixon and the Republican Party , with political donations to the re @-@ election campaign able to be diverted through the company as though they were unrelated transactions .

John Ehrlichman , a long @-@ time friend of Haldeman , who had also served as White House Counsel , had been part of the operation 's inception ; at this time he was Nixon 's domestic affairs assistant . Ehrlichman was the one who had initially hired Caulfield in 1969 ; Ehrlichman intended for Caulfield to conduct private investigation while undercover as a private sector employee , it was Caulfield who insisted on working from the White House . Caulfield 's work to this end had already

resulted in two wiretaps on phone lines ? one on Nixon 's brother Donald , and another on journalist Joseph Kraft .

Caulfield prepared a twelve @-@ page draft proposal detailing an intelligence @-@ gathering strategy , aimed at the opposition Democratic Party ; he had worked on this draft for several months and presented it to Nixon 's staff in September of 1971 . The proposal , dubbed " Operation Sandwedge " , called for a budget of \$ 500 @,@ 000 , primarily to cover private investigative work and security for the Republican National Convention , however Caulfield intimated privately that it would also include electronic surveillance .

= = Planned activities = =

The investigations and surveillance would , in part , assess how the anti @-@ Vietnam War movement could damage Nixon 's campaign . Nixon 's staff also anticipated that the Democratic campaign would employ the services of Intertel , a private investigation firm led by former Department of Justice officials who had served under Robert F. Kennedy , a Democrat and former Attorney General . Caulfield noted that this firm had the potential to employ " formidable and sophisticated " intelligence @-@ gathering techniques , and Sandwedge was his attempt to create a Republican counterpart to it . The plan would involve black bag operations , targeting political enemies of the campaign . Electronic surveillance was also an element of the proposal , with plans to scrutinize the private lives of the targets , including their tax records and sexual habits . The Sandwedge proposal also included a list of people willing to work with Caulfield on the project ; these included several investigators and officials of Inland Revenue , and a former sheriff of Cook County , Illinois .

Herb Kalmbach , Nixon 's own attorney , transferred \$ 50 @,@ 000 to Caulfield at the request of John N. Mitchell . Mitchell had served as Attorney General under Nixon 's first term , and directed the 1972 re @-@ election campaign . Caulfield was also given responsibility for the salary of Tony Ulasewicz , an operative he planned to use for Sandwedge activities . However , Strachan , Dean and other staff members were frustrated at the pace of Caulfield 's development of the project . Strachan directly questioned whether Caulfield was adequately capable for the role in a memo dated from October 1971 , while Haldeman , wishing for a project on a larger scale , pressed Mitchell for an budget of \$ 800 @,@ 000 for surveillance and " miscellaneous " activities .

During this time , Caulfield recruited James W. McCord , Jr . , a retired CIA officer , to protect the offices of the Republican National Convention and the CRP from electronic bugging . McCord would later be directly employed by CRP from January 1972 . Caulfield also sent Ulasewicz to the campaign offices of Paul McCloskey in New Hampshire . McCloskey was a Republican senator for California , who was running for the party 's presidential nomination against Nixon on a platform opposing the Vietnam War . He was not regarded as a credible threat to Nixon 's campaign , but had made statements calling for Nixon to be impeached . In December 1971 , Ulasewicz masqueraded as a journalist to interview McCloskey 's staff , with Caulfield dubbing the effort a " Sandwedge @-@ engineered penetration " .

= = Cancellation = =

That October , a meeting concerning Sandwedge was arranged between Haldeman , Mitchell , Magruder and Strachan . As a result of this meeting , control of the operation was passed along to G. Gordon Liddy , because Mitchell wished to have a lawyer in charge of the campaign 's intelligence @-@ gathering . Another factor in Caulfield 's removal from the helm was the belief of several White House officials , including Dean , was that Caulfield 's Irish @-@ American , non @-@ college educated background was at odds with " an Administration of WASP professional men " .

Liddy built upon the proposals to devise " Operation Gemstone " , a more expansive plan of espionage . Gemstone was an umbrella term for several individual operations , each of which expanded upon elements of the Sandwedge draft or existing CRP activities ? Operation Diamond

covered breaking up protest demonstrations , Ruby involved undercover infiltration and honeypot traps , Crystal concerned electronic surveillance and wiretaps , and Sapphire proposed the sabotage of rival political campaigns . Liddy 's initial draft of Operation Gemstone was deemed " too extreme " by campaign officials , but a scaled @-@ down version was later approved in 1972 . Despite Liddy 's restructuring of the project , a request for additional funding for the original Sandwedge proposal was made by Dean in January 1972 , although Mitchell 's rejection of this request signalled the project 's end .

Liddy 's revised Gemstone plan included a range of illegal activities , including a proposal to break into Democratic Party offices in the Watergate complex . The Watergate burglaries were initially assumed to have been part of Operation Sandwedge , and the investigation into both the burglaries and the project led to Caulfield 's resignation from his Nixon @-@ appointed position as assistant director of criminal enforcement in the Bureau of Alcohol , Tobacco , Firearms and Explosives .

= = Aftermath = =

In the wake of the Watergate scandal , 69 people were tried for various crimes , with 48 of these pleading guilty . Among those found guilty for covering up the affair were Haldeman , Ehrlichmann , Mitchell , Dean and Magruder , while Liddy was found guilty for his role in the break @-@ ins . All 48 men served time in prison as a result of their convictions .

Caulfield has suggested that Sandwedge 's cancellation by the administration was an error in judgement , possibly " the most monumental of the Nixon Presidency " . He believed that , if had Sandwedge been adopted as the campaign 's strategy , " there would have been no Liddy , no Hunt , no McCord " , and the subsequent Watergate scandal would not have occurred . Speaking of the initial proposal , Dean defended its merits , stating that " Caulfield , not the plan itself , had killed Sandwedge " .