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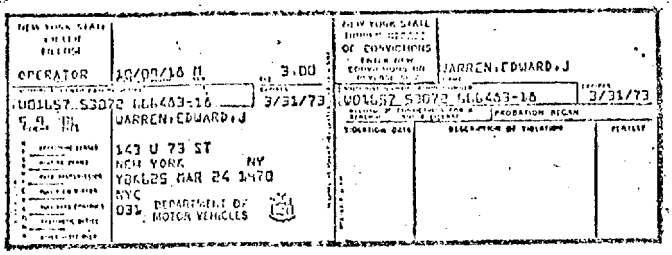
Hunt's Life As a Spy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Driver's license made out to Edward J. Warren, the identity used by E. Howard Hunt.

By DAVID ROSENTHAL

Edward Joseph Warren is a well-dressed man, a music lover, a gun enthusiast, a resident of Manhattan's least exclusive hotels. He is 55 years old and has only one real problem — he doesn't exist.

He is a figment of the imagination of the CIA. Theoretically, Edward Joseph Warren is what a properly disguised spy should resemble on a clandestine mission.

Convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt lived the few and only weeks of Edward Joseph Warren's "life" in the summer of 1971. In need of a cover for his work as a White House "plumber," Hunt requested and received from the CIA paraphernalia designed to conceal his true identity while providing him a new one. With the help of CIA technicians, Everette Howard Hunt Jr. became Edward Joseph Warren.

Published Documents

The details of how Hunt became Warren can be traced from documents on file with the Senate Watergate committee in Washington. The documents were published by the committee as part of the transcript of its hearings.

One document on file is a phony New York State driver's license, with an Upper West Side address. "This license was forged," said a Dept. of Motor Vehicles spokesman. "It was never issued by our agency." He denied any department cooperation with the CIA.

Acting Manhattan District Attorney Alfred Scotti, while unsure whether he had jurisdiction, said if his office could it would consider prosecuting those who falsified the license. "A forgery is a forgery," said Scotti, "even if committed by the government." A spokesman for Attorney General Lefkowitz said his office had no jurisdiction in forgery cases.

Wallach's was apparently Edward Joseph Warren's favorite clothier. A spokesman for the store was unable to explain how Hunt obtained one of its cards. "The CIA," he said, "has never requested any assistance from Wallach's."

The CIA also issued Hunt a life membership in the National Rifle Assn. An NRA spokesman was disturbed about the forged document. "It certainly doesn't make us look good," he said. "We wouldn't want to be involved in anything like Watergate."

Other companies whose identification cards were forged, including First National City Bank, New York Life Insurance Co., Continental Insurance and RCA, expressed varied feelings of surprise, indignation and helplessness when informed of the frauds.

A New York Life official could remember no similar incident in the insurance company's history. "But what can you do," he asked, "take the CIA into court?"

'Wouldn't Cooperate'

While saying that "no legal action was anticipated," a high Citibank official—who asked that his name not be used—emphasized that "we did not and would not cooperate with the CIA." Sounding annoyed, the official added: "Noboy likes to get mixe up in anything like this."

The quality of the CIA forgeries is readily apparent to experts. The code number on the driver's license, derived from a secret formula involving the registrant's birth date and name, so closely resembled the authentic version that State Motor Vehicle Depts. authorities originally thought the license was real. The state claims it did not give the code to the CIA, but says the information is known to state troopers and is on file with the FBI.

The CIA's knowledge of codes apparently extends beyond those in the public sector. On all but one of the other cards, the correct combination of numbers and letters was meticulously faked.

An Inconsistency

The phony Continental policy card was numbered 11-AF-654092. A Continental spokesman quickly spotted an inconsistency, however, noting that AF refers to an auto policy, which would have seven final digits, not six as on the Hunt version.

A spokesman for the CIA declined to comment, when asked if the state and private firms had cooperated in preparing the falsified documents. He also refused to disclose the name of the CIA section which prepares forgeries of this nature. "Everything we've had to say about Watergate," said the spokesman, "we've already told Congress. Any

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