

[sources say]

Deep Throat's Ghost

The Mark Felt I knew acted more out of personal pique than moral principle.

By Ralph de Toledano

WHO WAS DEEP THROAT? For some three decades that question echoed when Watergate, the scandal that drove a president out of the White House in disgrace, was chewed over. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the *Washington Post* reporters who wrote the shattering and marathon exposé of the scandal, gave Deep Throat as the major source of the sensational stories that forced Richard Nixon's resignation and brought down his administration. But they categorically refused to disclose his identity, except to say that he was an official in the executive branch who had access to the evidence. But so wide-ranging were Deep Throat's disclosures that it was often assumed he was a composite—amazing in a city where a state secret is something you heard in the Metropolitan Club bar.

Unexpectedly, the secret is out. Deep Throat is Mark Felt, assistant director and second-in-command of the FBI at the time, and who in the late 1970s had been indicted, tried, and convicted for authorizing wiretaps and illegal entries against the Weather Underground and other domestic terrorist groups. Prior to his trial, he had published an exculpatory memoir, *The FBI Pyramid*, largely written by me since his original manuscript read like *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*.

Contrary to legend, J. Edgar and Richard M. thoroughly disliked each

other, though they kept their feelings under wraps. Following his usual custom of trying to keep new presidents off-balance, Hoover sent Mark Felt to investigate trumped-up charges by political gossip columnist Jack Anderson that John Ehrlichman, a Nixon adviser, was a homosexual. Ehrlichman was cleared, but from that moment Felt had him in his pocket, and the president had it in for Felt.

When Hoover died, Felt served for one day as acting director. But when it was suggested that Felt take over Hoover's job, Nixon was emphatically against it. Felt was "a bad guy," Nixon said. "I don't want him. I want a fellow in there that is not part of the old guard." Instead, he

Ehrlichman was reporting White House cover-up activities to Felt, and he had been told that Felt was leaking to the *Washington Post* and to *Time*.

But there was a curious twist to Felt's behavior. Secretly violating his oath of office, he was playing a double game, hoping that in seeming to play up to the White House he would be appointed FBI director. There was a plan to have Deputy CIA Director Vernon Walters lean on Pat Gray and tell him, "Stay the hell out of this"—to call off the FBI's investigation. There were indications that Mark Felt would lend his support to this plan. Gray would then call Felt in and say, "We've got the signal from across the river [the CIA] to put the hold on this."

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appointed L. Patrick Gray III, a Justice Department official. When the scandal began to build, Bob Haldeman, Nixon's chief of staff, complained, "the FBI is not under control because Pat Gray doesn't exactly know how to control it." Felt was running the investigation, and it was "leading into some productive areas" and getting much too close to home. Everything that FBI agents were turning up was in Felt's hands. Moreover, Haldeman suspected, and he was correct, that

Felt resigned. The White House believed he would never go public. "No one likes an informer," Nixon said. But the case had by then developed its own momentum, the Oval Office tapes had been discovered, and Congress was moving decisively.

Mark Felt wrote his book. I re-wrote it and Felt swore to me that he was not Deep Throat, that he had never leaked information to the Woodward-Bernstein team or anyone else. The book was pub-

lished—and bombed. Felt was tried and convicted in his own scandals. Ironically, ex-President Nixon contributed to the defense of the man who had helped mightily to bring him down and testified at his trial. And Ronald Reagan later pardoned him.

More than a year ago, Mark Felt Jr. called me from Florida. He wished to revise *The FBI Pyramid* and add new unspecified material. Since I held 50 percent of the copyright, Mark Felt's lawyer, John O'Connor, who was to reveal Deep Throat's identity, offered to buy me out, though the book at the time had little sales potential. This puzzled me, but I signed over my rights. But the plan to spring Felt's identity must have hit a snag. I received no check, and my protesting letters and calls were ignored. My final letter to O'Connor rescinded the sale and threatened suit. This too was ignored. Then a month ago, out of the blue, I received a check, timed to arrive before the great revelation, "completing" the now non-existent deal. Something clearly was afoot, I realized, and so it was—an article in *Vanity Fair* by the aforesaid John O'Connor disclosing that Mark Felt had been Deep Throat. What I had not been told about when I sold my share of a dead and forgotten book was page-one news and grist for the TV mill. The Deep Throat disclosure had been the Felt-O'Connor ace in the hole and *The FBI Pyramid* was now a valuable property.

I had been gloriously and illegally deceived, and Deep Throat was in characteristic style back in business—which, given his history of betrayal, was par for the course. ■

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Press accounts concerning Jordanian terrorist Abu Mu'sab al-Zarqawi's reported wounding in Iraq have been contaminated by psychological-warfare operations being run by the Pentagon,

which include a bogus Internet *jihadi* site that provided alleged details regarding his whereabouts and condition. The site claimed that Zarqawi had been shot in the lung and was traveling with two doctors in a "neighboring country." Those details are invented and may be designed to justify Special Forces incursions into Syria and Iran. To reassure his concerned supporters, Zarqawi has responded to the widely reported accounts of his wounding with an Internet audiotape claiming that he is recovering. Zarqawi, whose voice on the tape appears authentic, directed some of his comments to Osama bin Laden, claiming that there will be a series of new attacks against the Americans and Shi'ite Iraqis. The tape emphasizes that Zarqawi himself is back in charge, suggesting that al-Qaeda will be unlikely to nominate a replacement for him. The recording does not reveal anything about the severity of Zarqawi's wounds, but he is almost certainly convalescing in an al-Qaeda safehouse inside Iraq.



The effectiveness of Zarqawi's group, "al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers," is increasing in spite of its leader's debilities.

May was the bloodiest month yet in Iraq. Seventy-seven American soldiers and Marines died together with 870 Iraqis. Zarqawi's jihadis claimed responsibility for many of the most devastating suicide-bomber attacks. It is apparent that al-Qaeda has grown far beyond the small group of "holy warriors" who infiltrated into Iraq shortly after the fall of Baghdad to coalition forces, and Osama bin Laden is reported to be pouring in funds and volunteers to strengthen and expand the insurgency. Bin Laden has long viewed Iraq as a suitable battleground on which to inflict a major defeat on the Americans, similar to the campaign he waged against the Soviets in Afghanistan.



Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is exploiting the reported medical condition of Zarqawi to ratchet up the pressure on Syria again.

He has warned that countries neighboring Iraq must not provide the Jordanian terrorist with medical care. Rumsfeld is strengthening a public case for taking more aggressive action against Damascus, even though there is no reliable report of any Syrian support for Zarqawi. Such assistance is not even considered plausible by U.S. intelligence.



An aspect of the Franklin Affair espionage case that has been little remarked upon is the content of the intelligence that was passed to the Israeli Embassy,

which reveals Tel Aviv's heavy involvement in Iraq. Franklin provided information relating to intended Iranian-sponsored attacks against American forces and also "Israeli agents" in Iraq. The agents in question are the numerous Israeli intelligence officers who operate clandestinely against Iran under the American security umbrella, primarily in the Kurdish region. By one estimate, there might be as many as 800 Israelis in the area, both military intelligence and Mossad. The Israelis frequently operate under cover as civilian contractors working ostensibly for the U.S. Defense Department. In some cases, they are using American military bases as their staging areas.

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