

## THE MEDIA BURGLARY AND THE MEDIA

Betty Medsger. *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. Vintage paperback, 2014.

*William O'Rourke*

Communicating with an old friend from the Harrisburg days of 1972, I mentioned a review I was writing for the *National Catholic Reporter* of Betty Medsger's new book, *The Burglary*, which is focused on two main events: the Media, PA, FBI office burglary of 1971 and the FBI's response to it, though, along the way, the book manages to cover most of the history of the Catholic and religious resistance of the anti-Vietnam war era.

"It's clear," I told my friend, "that she never read my Harrisburg book, which came as a surprise."

"Then why are you reviewing her book?" he asked.

"Well," I replied, "because I want to review it and everything I am putting in the review I believe."

Reviewing is a genre, insofar as there are conventions that are attached to the form, traditions that carry the weight of repetition, solidified into something like rules, though, really, there are no rules. Reviews do tend to conform to the publications they appear in and the writers often take on not so much the style of the source, but at least the manner of the periodical, how it does things. Like everywhere else, you can stretch the margins, but usually you are aware of them. Length also plays its rigid role.

My editor wanted 750 words and I ended up with 900, about as tight as I could make it, but I certainly had a lot more to say about *The Burglary*, so I am saying some of it here.

I haven't seen Betty Medsger in over forty years. The last time I saw her was back in Pennsylvania at an event I only have the dimmest recollections of, even to how I got there and why I attended. It was a conference of sorts and I was invited, which doubtless was a novel experience for me back then circa 1973. I can't remember if I did anything at the conference, or who paid for my travel—most likely myself, I think—but it was billed as a law enforcement confab, attorney generals, or chiefs of police, or something odd enough to make me think back then, Why not?

Betty Medsger was there, along with Ben Bagdikian. They both had left the *Washington Post* and were headed for the West Coast. I do remember being in a car with them, talking about the previous evening's featured speaker, the head of the Gallup Polling organization at the time, and I was joking,

mainly for Betty's benefit, that 42% of the audience had found it adequate, 22% had found it run of the mill, 18% found it boring, 8% liked it and 8% hated it. (I didn't actually go on that long.) Betty laughed—neither she nor Bagdikian had heard the speech, coming in just for this day, one or both of them being slated to do something at the conference. Bagdikian gave me a sour look, miffed that the much younger man, myself, was making Betty laugh.

It was then I asked her why the *Post* hadn't reviewed my Harrisburg book\*, one of the few publications that hadn't, and she told me that when it arrived she brought it to the attention of the book editor and he said, "We've already done those books"—those books, I thought then, being Jack Nelson's (with co-author Ronald Ostrow) book on the trial, *The FBI and the Berrigans*, and one other book on the Berrigan brothers.

But, it turned out, those books were reviewed separately and the only one on the trial was Nelson and Ostrow's volume. And it was Betty who wrote the review, a not entirely complimentary one, which I didn't track down at the time, but have finally read, some forty-plus years later. Some of her ideas enlarged on in *The Burglary* were evident even then, though her musing in the review—"Surely an exploration of how 12 middle Americans in rural Pennsylvania came to vote 10-2 for acquittal would be significant"—did wait for Paul Cowan (who, alas, died in 1988) to explore at length in a book, *State Secrets*, which came out in 1974 and was put together by himself and four other authors. And, of course, I covered—and answered—succinctly her jury question in my book in 1972.

But that encounter in the car was the last time I was with Betty Medsger, other than the three months we were sitting day after day in the press section of the courtroom of Harrisburg's Federal Building.

In addition, she was helpful when I came to Washington, D.C., immediately after the trial, to do more research at Ramsey Clark's law firm, Paul Weiss Rifkind and Garrison, mainly going through the copy of the trial transcript they had there. Clark let me use their offices and even got me a key (which I still have). It was the early seventies and the feminist movement of the time was heating up and it was certainly needed, given the young male lawyers' behavior and their pursuit of the secretaries at the Friday afternoon parties that went on there. I was making notes from the transcripts and they were running around chasing skirts. I thought perhaps I should go to law school.

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\* *The Harrisburg 7 and the New Catholic Left*, T.Y. Crowell, 1972; 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, with a new Afterword, Notre Dame Press, 2012.

And Betty let me invade the newsroom of the *Washington Post*, which then did look more or less like the one captured in the film of *All the President's Men*, yet to come. Indeed, the Watergate burglary had not yet taken place, since it was April of 1972, and Woodward and Bernstein were doubtless doing not much of general interest at the time.

What I was doing was availing myself of the *Post's* Berrigan morgue files that Betty let me access. Access then meant her bringing me the fat paper files and letting me leaf through them.

Of the things that have been lost with the onslaught of digitization and the internet is what I call the mandala effect (not the Madela Effect): The arrangement of similar things that will form unexpected patterns if you place them together, often in a circular fashion, or, at least, a grouping where you can see them all at once.

This is hard to do on a computer, though not difficult to do if you have clipping files from many years spread out on a desk top, which was the case at the *Post*. Computers have reintroduced a linearity to modern thinking, one thing after another, unless one prints out everything one finds and implements the older effect.

Betty was a help to my book, allowing me to despoil the *Post's* "morgue", a term oddly no longer much used, especially given the current fascination with zombies, prompting the realization that not much history these days actually dies. (A nod here to Mr. Faulkner.) Google enlivens the undead. And Medsger is quoted in my book, as "B."—any reporter I quoted I usually identified by the first letter of his or her first name (and she is thanked in the Acknowledgments of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition).

But when I finished reading *The Burglary* it was clear she hadn't read my book at all. And that is the kindest assessment. Otherwise, she would be guilty of an overt act, harking back to the Harrisburg trial language of how to prove conspiracy. In this country, as I've pointed out before, the most effective act of censorship is to ignore. It's capitalism's weapon of choice. Heaping scorn on something just brings it notice. To not mention it at all is the way to go, beckoning oblivion.

It's always hard to be written out of history, especially if you've written history. But my Harrisburg book is absent from *The Burglary's* bibliography, and every other page, including a list found on p. 546, of books that "have noted the significance of the 1971 Media burglary." It's a long list. And it includes Jack Nelson's book, which came out at the same time as mine.

Of course, in my book, I quote from the Media papers, and indicate their significance. I still have a set of the Media papers—they were well circulated by early 1972—and for whatever reason (most likely people we

had in common) I was contacted by Frank Donner, the author *The Age of Surveillance* (1980), working at Yale at the time, for a copy of what I had, which I collegially agreed to do at a cost of nineteen dollars for the duplication. He was to pay me upon receipt, which he never did. Nineteen dollars was a big deal to me back then when I was writing the Harrisburg book, living on roughly three hundred dollars a month.

And I was certainly stung to be made invisible in *The Burglary*, since it was clear to me—and I made it clear in my review—that Betty’s book will become a standard text for the subject, outfitted as it is with notes, bibliography, etc., and published by America’s fanciest press, Alfred A. Knopf. (My disappointment, though, didn’t affect the review, which appeared on July 2, 2014, and can be found here: <http://ncronline.org/books/2014/07/reporting-anti-war-catholics-and-fbi>)

Not that this hasn’t happened before. Many books have appeared over the years where my book is absent from the bibliography. A lot of this neglect can be blamed on the lack of an index in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, which, as most historians will admit, consigns your work to only obsessive specialists of the most narrow sort who will wade through an entire book they’ve haven’t yet read. This would be almost no one. Though the current attempt to digitize all books would change this.

I was under the spell at the time I wrote the book, I suppose, of Norman Mailer, who hadn’t had any index for, say, *The Armies of the Night*. In 2012, when the Harrisburg book was reprinted, with a new Afterword, I made sure it had a solid index, though that edition’s appearance evidently managed also to pass Betty by.

Ah, well.

As I wrote in my original review, the Media burglary had its truncated moment in the sun, because, among other reasons, so many secrets were beginning to be exposed at the time.

During the Harrisburg trial, which began not quite a year after the Media burglary, Daniel Ellsberg showed up at the courthouse, mainly because his lawyer for the case prompted by the Pentagon Papers revelations, which had come a year before the Media burglary, was Leonard Boudin, one of the principal Harrisburg attorneys. Ellsberg’s trial had yet to begin.

The Pentagon Papers release, in the summer of 1970, was the first unveiling of insider behavior, followed fairly quickly by the even more damning White House Tapes, which were to trickle out a year after the Harrisburg trial ended. The White House tapes were, in a way, more devastating than the Pentagon Papers release, because they showed Americans how their leaders actually talked to one another, whereas the Pentagon Papers,

put together by “experts”, were actually a higher form of literacy than the pedestrian and profane utterances taking place in Nixon’s Oval Office.

Two items in the Media papers became part of the popular culture. The first more prevalent than the other: an “FBI agent behind every mailbox,” is how it was often put. Hoover and his underlings were happy to generate general paranoia. The other took longer to uncover, the all-caps CONINTELPRO notation found on one FBI routing slip. It couldn’t be reduced to a bumper sticker.

Speaking of paranoia, when a large and boisterous event was held in Harrisburg in April, 2012, to memorialize the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the trial, I was approached there by a former Pennsylvania state official who had testified at the trial for the prosecution and he claimed that it was well known amongst law enforcement at the time of the trial that the Weatherman would set off a bomb at the trial’s end if the defendants weren’t acquitted. Paranoia traveled both ways in those days, top down, from Hoover to the FBI agents and on to other law enforcement entities and hangers-on.

One difference between establishment and anti-establishment journalism of that period (a veritable golden age compared to today) was illustrated by the facts that emerged following the decoding of CONINTELPRO. As I put it in the *NCR* review: “Indeed, *The Burglary* is a demonstration of what establishment journalism could and did accomplish back then, as opposed to the rougher sort of new journalism that flourished during the 1970s and ‘80s—Tom Wolfe, Hunter Thompson, et al.”

No one in the anti-war world was surprised at all by the revelations of the Media papers. It just verified what we all thought at the time. Establishment journalists were the ones claiming to be surprised or shocked. That is why the Media papers amongst activists just came and went. Been there, done that. But, establishment journalists stuck with them, being on the surface less cynical than the tribe of younger, fringe, anti-establishment writers. But it took a couple of years to reveal to the public the nature of CONINTELPRO. As Medsger writes: “It was the persistence of Carl Stern, a legal affairs reporter for NBC television, that led to CONINTELPRO being exposed.”

Stern filed a Freedom of Information Act request (after finally noticing the term in March of 1972) and, after being refused access, he sued the Department of Justice and the FBI in Federal court. Back then, this sort of “persistence” could only be bankrolled by a large news organization like NBC. Today, alas, individuals are just as likely, if not more, to resort to the courts to discover facts that the networks and the few large newspapers that still exist might be thought to uncover.

The FBI, however, noticed the CONINTELPRO leak immediately and back in 1971 Hoover changed the name of the program in order to make it disappear, though the behavior did not change. One ancillary result of Stern's persistence was the Church Committee hearings in 1975. Before then, Sy Hersh reported in the *New York Times* in late 1974 about the CIA's actions against the state-side anti-war movement.

Hersh is a special case, a fringe reporter elevated to establishment rank by his freelance reporting in 1969 of the 1968 My Lai massacre. Though, apart from Hersh's articles, it was the photograph of the bodies of women and children and old men in the ditch, distributed widely as a poster, that made My Lai infamous. (In our increasingly aural-visual age, photographs still play a larger role in the culture than prose—consider Abu Ghraib.) Nonetheless, Hersh became temporarily attached to the *New York Times* and then his long career of high-end muckraking finally forced him back to the fringe. Though he still publishes in respectable places, the establishment press treats him as a gadfly.

CONINTELPRO was begun by Hoover in 1956. It was his Id on fire, being in all ways as twisted in its methods and results as he was. He was especially manic regarding the Civil Rights movement and African-Americans' struggles for justice. Medsger's book, as I noted in my original review, is rather gentle on the man. Indeed, she takes the high road most everywhere. She began as a traditional journalist and, for a variety of reasons, she remains in a number of ways its champion. *The Burglary*, for all its seamy revelations, is a genteel product.

If I wanted to be a sexist pig I could call it lady-like, not a term much in use these days. But it is more a matter of good manners. Since the world now has a million "journalists" on the internet, it is a rowdy world indeed and the current atmosphere makes a book like *The Burglary* seem more of an anachronism, and a welcomed respite.

But, one of the oddities in a book so complete is its treatment of William Davidon, the instigator of the Media heist. The first chapter begins, "In late 1970, William Davidon..." and the second chapter starts, "The story of the Media burglary begins with William Davidon." But Davidon remains a mysterious figure, insofar as there is little about his growing up, his young adulthood, his career as a physicist. He appears, more or less, fully formed, a "mild-mannered physics professor at Haverford College,"

There is a transcribed oral history interview posted by the American Institute of Physics online at <http://www.aip.org/history/ohilist/32356.html>, which contains the most information I could find on Davidon's early life, little of which found its way into *The Burglary*.

He is the first cause of the Media event and his background reminded me of a number of figures involved in the anti-Vietnam war resistance period. He seemed a thoroughly establishment figure, a Navy veteran, his degrees from the University of Chicago, work in the defense industry/academic conglomerate—mainly at the Argonne laboratory outside of Chicago, a younger “greatest generation” figure, similar, actually, to Philip Berrigan, but of an entirely different stripe, a Jewish intellectual, a scientist with pacifist tendencies, worried about nuclear proliferation immediately after the end of WWII, but, nonetheless, in the belly of the beast, working at Argonne.

He reminded me of Daniel Ellsberg, an insider who decided to become an outsider, but retaining connections to both worlds.

Indeed, Davidon and two other unindicted co-conspirators of the initial Harrisburg indictment met in the White House two days before the Media burglary. Medsger covers this well in her book, but the confluence is still astounding. Davidon was used to traveling in august company, PhDs everywhere, and certainly wasn't cowed by the pomp and circumstance. Henry Kissinger, after all, was a professor, more or less, elevated to a mass murderer, given his rise to a position of power. But, as Davidon doubtless thought or felt, they were all mass murderers, the scientists who manufactured the A-bomb, and he was one of them—if not directly, at least by occupation. Troubled over nuclear proliferation, Davidon was an early member of the Federation of Atomic Scientists, American Friends Service Committee, Society for Social Responsibility in Science, SANE, and other peace groups.

Here's what Davidon says in his oral history about the White House meeting and his pre-disclosure remarks (he died in 2013, before all the publicity began around Medsger's book) about the Media burglary:

*Henry Kissinger I think, liked to think of himself as a maverick and independent person who could do as he pleased. When Hoover made these charges that a group of people were claiming to kidnap him, I think he took it as somewhat of a joke. And through a whole series of events he kept saying he was open to a group of people coming and talking with him about the war, but he wouldn't talk about the charges for kidnaping. So all of those who met with Kissinger were among those that one way or another remained in this indictment. But we went to talk about the war. As I commented publicly at the time, contrary to some, he's a good listener. He listens to what people say and responds without giving routine responses. That is a number of issues we raised concerning the U.S. policies in Vietnam. One of the immediate ones was there had been threats, what we perceived as threats to the use nuclear weapons. He tried hard to dispel us from thinking there was any serious consideration to the*

*use of nuclear weapons. So it was sort of, to some extent, fun and games and the novelty of being in the White House with Kissinger with people who were being accused of plotting to kidnap him. And also, particularly Tom Davidon (?) [Davidson is the man's name. W.O.] and myself were trying to sort of test the situation. We came with briefcases stuffed with irrelevant stuff to see whether or not we'd be searched when we came into the White House. And in the middle of the meeting I excused myself to go to the bathroom. I wanted to see would I be followed in the White House if I went to the bathroom. There's that fun and games aspect of playing with the White House, testing the limits. The substance part of it was talking with Kissinger, and then using that as an occasion to afterwards talk with some columnists about what went on, and about why we were talking about our views on the war with Kissinger.*

[Patrick Catt conducted the interview in July of 1997, W.O.]

*Catt: Were you followed?*

*Davidon: Not to my knowledge. Our briefcases weren't searched. You could have brought anything in. As far as we could tell we weren't followed.*

*Catt: This says March 8, 1971, media.*

*Davidon: There was a burglary of the FBI office in media [Media, PA, W.O.]. My role in it has never been made public, and I won't make that public now. The public part of my role in it was a couple of days later I received in the mail a packet of materials that were taken for media. I presented them at a meeting—I'd already been scheduled to give a talk to a group of ministers and I presented this information and a number of newspapers and magazines picked up on that. And that sort of began the publicity from that media burglary. So I was sort of known as somebody that was involved. And also when people—there were mailings to various newspapers from the group that took the materials. And when individuals from different newspapers wanted to get more material, I sort of became a contact person. People would contact me and say they would like information and I would tell them I would try to get it to them. And often they would end up with materials. So I was clearly linked within some way. And that's one of the things when the FBI and the Freedom of Information Act, all the stuff they gave me made no reference to media, and I was convinced that they must have stuff in their files concerning media. So when I was talking to this guy in the FBI [!, W.O.], I said check under what the FBI refers to as med-burg, media burglary, see whether my name comes up there. I think I already mentioned he called back a short time later all enthusiastic. "Yes, yes, your name came up lots of times." [!, W.O.] And there's a whole new packet of materials.*

One of the mysteries of the Media burglary was why no one was “caught”. As described by Medsger, the FBI continued to be clueless till the end, but I find that hard to believe. The Bureau may have had a list of possibles—even I knew in 1972 the burglary was done by an unnamed segment of the East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives, mainly Catholic activists. But, in this case it turns out, led by a Jew. The Jewish/Catholic connection in the peace movement was as prevalent back then as it was, is, in the labor movement over the decades.

The Harrisburg jury was deliberating for a week and during that time, the end of March, beginning of April of 1972, there was an “action” in nearby York, PA. As Davidon tells it in 1997:

*Catt: Then December '71 question mark. Made hundreds of bomb casings unusable at AMF plant in York, PA.*

*Davidon: The question mark is just the date. I don't remember the date for sure and looking at defining the methods making it a reconstruction of that date. But this was York, Pennsylvania, was American Machine Foundry produced these bomb casings, 500 pound casings for the Navy. And they're just sort of kept in the railroad siting [that would be siding, W.O.]. Most people in this immediate area went there and stripped the thread. They have a part that screws together. You strip the threads so they had to be re-machined. They couldn't be used then. So it was partly delaying the use of these bomb casings, but partly again, making more visible opposition to the war.*

*Catt: I want to say, and the government's response to this?*

*Davidon: As far as I know, nothing. I was never in any way contacted or investigated. I'm sure there must have been some sort of investigation, but nothing that affects me in any way.*

This was a curious event. Medsger discusses it on pp. 440-441 of her book. Yet another packet of papers and a release from the Citizens' Commission to Demilitarize Industry (a similar name to the Media group) claiming that it also was responsible for the Media burglary delivered to a few journalists. My friend from Harrisburg wrote about it in the *Harrisburg Independent Press*, one of many alternative newspapers popping up in cities across America at the time, though this one was, more or less, an offshoot of the Harrisburg Defense Committee, the March 30-April 6, 1972 issue:

*First word of the sabotage came Sunday night when, according to the Harrisburg Defense Committee, Ted Glick [an original Harrisburg defendant, but severed from the trial, since he wanted to go pro se, W.O.] found seven*

*plastic tops that had been removed from the [bomb] casings and copies of a press release from the Commission in his car. Glick distributed the releases to reporters, and two of them—Sue Gowen of United Church Press and this reporter—followed a map that came with the release and arrived at the scene of the sabotage about 1:30 a.m. Monday.... Our inspection of the area was interrupted by company guards, who threatened us with arrest for trespassing and took us to the plant gatehouse for questioning. We told them of the Commission release, giving them their first indication of the sabotage.*

What is always provocative about such actions is not the vandalism involved, but how easy it was to accomplish. The recent Oak Ridge 3 case of 2013 is a contemporary example. Even at a so-called National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tenn., an octogenarian nun and two elderly male companions were able to spray paint anti-nuke slogans on a building after gaining access by cutting through chainlink fence. They're all still serving time. (I wrote about that case here: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/175437/oak-ridge-3-facing-lengthy-sentences-anti-nuclear-protest-draw-new-support>.)

And the other prominent thing shown by such actions is the ubiquitousness of the military-industrial complex, all the large corporations that produce consumer products, as well as armaments and other war material, in this case, an AMF plant nearby Harrisburg. Americans give their most tacit support to one form of socialism in this country, usually unacknowledged, the military and the industries that support it. The military is so socialist an outfit all their members even wear uniforms, yet the public does not seem to see the connection.

Nonetheless, William Davidon continued to cause mischief, and the FBI didn't seem to care. Why? What was going on? If I was of the Graham Greene or John le Carré stripe, I would tag Davidon as the perfect deep agent, or double agent type, cloaked as he is with so many high-status establishment credentials.

I don't really believe Davidon was in anyone's pocket, but it is curious. In the same vein, we have the current Secretary of State, John Kerry. As I have pointed out over the years, the Vietnam war (the *causa belli* of all the anti-war actions discussed here) was so strange that the most effective anti-war group turned out to be the soldiers who fought the war itself, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It can't get any weirder than that. And John Kerry became the group's most prominent member, uttering the line before Congress in 1971, one of the most famous sentences of the period, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

That sentence, of course, is only said now with bitter irony, coming as it did from Kerry's mouth. There always has been a tendency to co-op certain organizations for the benefit of, well, the powers that be. Gloria Steinem is an example, given her early history with CIA supported organizations, all the Redstocking and *Ramparts* magazine charges she dealt with in the mid-1970s. I'm not questioning whether or not Steinem had, as it was put at the time, "continuing ties" with the government, but she certainly mainstreamed feminism, made it comfortable for the establishment, in the way John Kerry mainstreamed the denouement of the Vietnam protest movement.

And during the war, and after, it was the military that promulgated the false stories of wholesale disrespectful treatment of soldiers by civilians, the so-called "spitting" tales and worse. Those efforts were so successful that, as recently as November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, Maureen Dowd began her Sunday column ("A Cup of G.I. Joe") in the *New York Times* with this sentence: "When I close my eyes, I can easily flash back to a time when it was cool to call people in uniform 'pigs' and 'baby killers.'" The military itself, back in the late Sixties and early Seventies, was happy to engender the us-against-them atmosphere, even after the war, which certainly plays a role in the current thank-you-for-your-service mantra heard these days.

It's a matter of gaining, or not losing, social control. Even though the country has been fighting a number of wars, there is no anti-war movement that is in any way equivalent to the 1960s-70s period. And that is not an accident.

Historians have debated the effects of the anti-war movement of the Vietnam era, what role it played in "ending" the war. The anti-war movement did a lot of things, though, given LBJ's dour view of possible success of the entire enterprise and Nixon's long held intentions of getting out of the conflict, his "Vietnamization," similar to our training of the Iraq army—and as successful—the military realized its options were limited and grim all along.

What the anti-war movement helped fuel was the social change going on in the country during the Sixties and Seventies, the shift from the post-WWII world of mom, dad, two point four kids, a car in the garage, the age of conformity, etc. All the cultural change that was to occur was supercharged by the protests in the streets, by the highs and lows of the variety of anti-war actions throughout the period. The Resistance, as it was called then, was just that, resistance. In the late 60s and early 70s, though, it was never seen as the limiting thing it was: born to merely slow down the war machine, to create friction, so all the bad that could happen might be

checked. It provided moral ballast to somewhat restrain our government's worst instincts.

The protest movement covered in *The Burglary* was largely a white world. There was a paradox at work, insofar as the Civil Rights movement that preceded the anti-war movement affected most of the leadership of the anti-war movement, and the transformations and conflicts within the Civil Rights movement played out its own version of nonviolence versus violence, Martin Luther King, Jr. vs. the Black Panthers. Some White protest groups that combined both issues were more likely to become, or promote, violent tactics, not peaceful ones. Like the Weatherman, which, given its ironic history, in its last manifestation finally mimicked the clownish Symbionese Liberation Army, and devolved into a mere gang of Black and White bank robbers. But the lurid history of slavery, and the treatment of American Blacks, was often the motivation, or excuse, to adopt violence as a tactic during the anti-war years.

The reception of *The Burglary*, the reviews and attention it has received, replays some of the debate in the analytical, pundit and activist community. The *New York Times Book Review* critic, David Oshinsky, writes: "Throughout the book, the burglars are portrayed as devoted followers of civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. But one of the tenets of such behavior is to take responsibility for the act."

The *Wall Street Journal's* review, by James Rosen, of Fox News, attempts to correct the text, pointing out the "famous break-in"—the Watergate one—took place in the office building, not the hotel. (Most journalists use the term "complex" when writing of the Watergate, to avoid specificity and yet remain correct.) Rosen also states Medsger mangles the "Huston Plan" discussion, not seeing John Mitchell's role in the fiasco clearly. It is certainly amusing to see someone defend and praise John Mitchell.

The *New York Review of Books* used Aryeh Neier for its review. I was hoping for Garry Wills, since I knew he had read my book. But no such luck. Neier, for many years, was the director of Human Rights Watch and, as normally holds for reviewers, he spends a lot of time contemplating his main interests, foreign surveillance, which leads to Edward Snowden.

Snowden figures in the *NYT Book Review* notice, too, as he does in Medsger's book, at its end, the penultimate chapter, "The NSA Files." Oshinsky, in the *NYTBR*, writes, "The problem is that, unlike Snowden, these burglars committed a serious felony on the suspicion that a government bureau was engaging in nefarious activities; they had no evidence in hand." [!] "Would their actions have been equally heroic had they come up dry? Where Snowden and the Pennsylvania burglars do converge, however,

is in their decision to evade capture.”

Putting aside the lack of evidence “in hand”—more was known about the illegalities of the FBI than Oshinsky lets on, as Neier points out in the *NYRB* (he cites an early 1950 book, *The Federal Bureau of Investigation*, by Max Lowenthal)—Snowden may have evaded capture, but he certainly exposed himself to the world, not a thing the Media burglars did till John and Bonnie Raines spilled the beans to Medsger decades later.

Actually, only after that news became disseminated, did the eighth burglar come forward. Medsger got cooperation from seven of the eight participants for her book, though three wanted to remain anonymous. (Judi Feingold’s—the eight participant—own story is told in a new Epilogue to the paperback edition.) And at least one researcher, beyond Medsger, knows the identity of one of burglars who did not want to be publicly identified, she being a woman who was also a member of the acquitted Camden 28 crew.

Regarding the NSA revelations and what attributes Snowden shared with the Media burglars, it is clear that Snowden was alarmed about what the government was doing and sanctioning. He certainly had the evidence “in hand.”

Snowden, though, is more in the vein of Daniel Ellsberg, though, clearly, not so far up on the pecking order as Ellsberg was in the insider world. The common phrase, “the military-industrial complex,” is an augury of the more wholesale privatization of the military side of that conjoining since the Reagan administration, and Snowden, after starting in government agencies, became a contractor and is one example of many of how that relationship bites back.

Snowden, in a number of ways, was in the same position as lower-level scientists working on the creation of the atomic bomb. I suppose that is why establishment figures want to consider him a “spy”. But, as is the case with the Manhattan Project, it was the science that was leading the way, in control, and drove the outcome. Scientists saw what they could build, so they went ahead and built it. The science itself was a Siren’s song.

Today, the computer world’s technology has become so potent and avaricious that, like the destructive capabilities of A-bomb building, its reach and size outstrips what common sense would require or allow. Everyone involved followed the science and let it multiply. Then they put it to use.

Like the atomic bomb, computer technology is a matter of putting the cart before the horse. Indeed, the cart has been dragging the horses along for quite a while. In the nuclear world, though the H-bomb was created and exploded, even scientists wanted to scale down production, make the weap-

ons smaller and more manageable, even to developing the neutron bomb, no destruction, only death. And, to sell some domestic use, the history of the nuclear energy business remains open, sort of, to inspection, testament to scientists' attempts to make their dark knowledge palatable. (Ironically, it was the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant incident of 1979, near Harrisburg, that replaced the Harrisburg trial in the popular imagination as that city's most famous modern event.) And there's nuclear medicine, too!

Though the military began the computer age, its enthusiasts and inventors have been more successful at finding ways to rope in the general population and make the technology indispensable. That there are dangers associated with it—assaults on both privacy and security—are taken as mere unavoidable byproducts.

Snowden was the technician who had access to documents, though, in his case, the document dump was—in the computer-age way—enormous.

This sort of thing has been in the public realm for some time. *The Falcon and the Snowman* case happened in 1977, bringing to public notice TRW's role in defense work. What do "spies" want? In the case of *The Falcon and the Snowman* it was a wacky plan of two young friends to reap profits from selling "secrets" to the Russians (or Soviets back then).

Typical spies either want money or ideological glory. The non-spies, Snowden, Ellsberg, Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning, the Media burglars, all wanted to inform the public and were over exposed publically. Only the Media burglars remained in the shadows—till now.

There is a new Tower of Babel and the NSA is in control of it, if the word control in that context means anything anymore. We live in a world where the amount of things to read outstrips any science fiction writer's imagination and, at the same time, reading comprehension of the young continues to decrease.

Now, thanks (not the right word) to Amazon, every book ever printed is available to buy, enlarging beyond measure the competition for any individual author. The one percent might have been made famous by the amorphous 21<sup>st</sup> century protest group, Occupy Wall Street, called upon only to appear and hang around, but our ninety-nine-and-one-percent world can be applied to any number of social constructs, not just current economics. And that 99/1 is so close to 9/11 (and 911) is one reason why the trope sticks.

I am not sure even *The Burglary* in both editions will reach one percent of its potential readers. Historians tend to dismiss the Catholic Left protests of the Vietnam era as sideshows—even the larger protest movement gets downplayed as not instrumental in ending that war. It was the serious people, they believe, who ended it, those serious people being, of course, the

same people who started it.

And we are now entering the period where the actors of such events are dying off. Then it will really become "history", the past being a place as mysterious as the future, open only to interpretation and speculation.

Medsker's book comes at the right time. As does a recent documentary, *Hit & Stay*, which interviews a number of figures who were involved in the same draft-board-raiding events her book covers. It is becoming a digitized world and it is good these people have been thus preserved, now being able to move forward into the technological future.

Medsker does make one mistake about the Harrisburg case that no one, likely, but myself would notice. On pp. 313-314, she writes, "The Harrisburg trial had ended in April 1972 in a hung jury. Once determined to win this case designed to protect Hoover's reputation, Department of Justice officials decided not to retry the defendants when, even in deeply conservative Dauphin County, they did not get convictions."

But, of course, the prosecutors did get convictions, on the so-called "contraband" counts, the smuggling of Elizabeth McAlister and Philip Berrigan's sad and hopeful letters taken in and out of Lewisburg penitentiary, Counts IV-X. Even in Paul Cowan's long piece about the jurors, resulting from interviews conducted after the trial, "Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Ballad for Americans," and reprinted in his 1979 book, *The Tribes of America*, Cowan doesn't, apparently, question the jurors about the compromise they reached in order to convict Berrigan and McAlister on the contraband counts. It is a peculiar omission. Cowan offers up the majority of the jurors as citizen heroes, though the ten-to-two vote for acquittal came about not because of the common sense they showed so much as the weaknesses of the government's case and the odiousness of its chief witness/informer.

There was a period over ten years ago where I had been obliged to write a number of letters to editors of various periodicals correcting some distinguished person's reference to the Harrisburg 7 case (including the *New York Times*) that claimed defendants were "acquitted" at Harrisburg. No one was acquitted at Harrisburg.

Medsker doubtless meant the defendants, all seven, hadn't been convicted on the major conspiracy and threatening-letter Counts I, II, and III, those at the heart of the whole tangled web that had festered in J. Edgar Hoover's disturbed mind. On those counts the jury was hung. That's the trouble with history. It's hard to get things right. She should have read my book.