

Profile in Courage: Congressman Neil Gallagher

by Bonnie James

LaRouchePAC has produced a remarkable new 100-minute [video interview](#) under the above title, which digs up long-buried and forgotten secrets, presented in the voice of one individual who was at the center of the dramatic events of the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s; this was the period of the McCarthy witchhunts; the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King; the upsurge of the rock-drug-sex counterculture, and much more. That individual, Cornelius (Neil) Gallagher, now a feisty 92-year-old, served as the Democratic Congressman from Bayonne, N.J., from 1959 to 1973—when he was driven out by the spider at the center of the secret government's web: J. Edgar Hoover.¹

Given the vast expansion of the secret government today—NSA spying on Americans; the corruption of our political process and institutions of government (especially the Congress) by the Wall Street financial imperialism—it is urgent that the story presented here be given the widest circulation.



LPAC

Neil Gallagher, who was a member of Congress from New Jersey (1959-73), tells the story of his efforts to expose and defeat the secret government during the 1950s and '60s, in which he risked his political career—and his life—by speaking truth to power.

The Kennedy Assassination

Gallagher's friendship with Jack Kennedy dated from the 1956 Democratic Convention, when Kennedy was a young Senator from Massachusetts and Gallagher was a Freeholder from Bayonne. In 1958, Gallagher was elected to Congress, and by then, Kennedy was contemplating a run for the Presidency. Kennedy's

election in 1960, and Gallagher's position on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, put the two men in frequent contact, and they collaborated on the creation of the Peace Corps, among many other things.

Asked in the interview, who he thought was behind the assassination of JFK, he said: "I was convinced that, if there was a conspiracy, there was only one group that could have brought it off, and that was [FBI Director J. Edgar] Hoover. And Hoover hated the Kennedys.... I never could figure out whether or not he really set up Oswald.... And this guy, Lee Harvey Oswald had been to Russia.... So here you had a guy came back from

1. Ron Felber's book, *The Privacy War: One Congressman, J. Edgar Hoover and the Fight for the Fourth Amendment* (2003), covers Gallagher's battle to protect Americans' from the intrusions of the secret government.



Sen. Joe McCarthy's reign of terror against American citizens in the 1950s paved the way for J. Edgar Hoover's gestapo that followed. The link between them was the political hit man Roy Cohn. The photo at left shows McCarthy (left) with Cohn; the inset photo on the right is of FBI Director Hoover.



Russia, was known to the FBI, went to the FBI! The FBI investigated him, and he was unloosed, and nobody knew what the hell was going on. And yet, there's no way that the FBI could not have been monitoring Lee Harvey Oswald, all the time. Because they monitored everybody!"

The Warren Commission

A key figure of the period, and friend of Gallagher, was Hale Boggs of Louisiana, who was the House Majority Leader (1971-73) and member of the Warren Commission. In September 1966, Boggs came to Gallagher's office and told him that Hoover had lied to the Commission, that the lone gunman story was a fraud, and that the investigation should be reopened. Boggs added that, "Hoover and the CIA have bugs planted in the House Caucus Rooms and most of our offices."

"Suddenly everybody is scared of the FBI, is scared of Hoover, is scared of his spooks," Gallagher said.

By this time, Gallagher reported, Boggs had begun to believe that Oswald had been set up. "And if you looked at the committee, the Warren Commission, it was the Chief Justice; and then it was John J. McCloy, the chairman of the board; Allen Dulles," Gallagher said. "McCloy is the guy who did all the work and he wrote the opinion, along with the support of Dulles. And I asked President Johnson, one time, 'How did

you come to put Allen Dulles on there, who was an enemy of Kennedy's?' And he just avoided the whole question."

"If Hoover didn't set this whole thing up," he added, "then there was only one other guy who could have done it, and that was Allen Dulles! Because Allen

Dulles's job, in Europe during World War II, was to run assassination committees, groups, all around Europe, when he was head of the OSS over there." And, he noted, "He was an enemy of Kennedy."

McCarthyism

Gallagher's courage asserted itself as well, in his refusal to have anything to do with Sen. Joe McCarthy and his witchhunts of

Americans based on charges of "Communist sympathies." Even as "a little county commissioner" in the 1950s, Gallagher refused to sponsor McCarthy at a communion breakfast in his church. "I hated everything McCarthy stood for, and I guess it was contrary to what you were supposed to be if you were an Irish Catholic from Bayonne. But I had an innate feeling against injustice, and [McCarthy] was one of the worst provocateurs of injustice in America in those days."

Later, Gallagher, then in Congress, was approached by McCarthy's sidekick, Roy Cohn, who, by that time, was one of Hoover's political hit men, with a huge FBI dossier on then-Presidential candidate Bobby Kennedy. When Gallagher refused to hold hearings on the FBI's charges against RFK, mafioso Sid Zagri, who accompanied Cohn, offered him \$100,000 bribe—and Cohn added a threat, that Hoover would not consider Gallagher a "friend," if he refused. "I'm everybody's friend, Roy," the Congressman replied, "but I'm nobody's whore." Soon after that, Cohn returned with another demand from Hoover, which Gallagher rejected. Cohn threatened, "This is the last chance you are doing to get!"

The Congressman's next encounter with Cohn involved even cruder threats from Hoover: "You'll be



White House

House Majority Leader Hale Boggs of Louisiana called for Hoover's resignation on the floor of the Congress, in April 1971. On Oct. 18, 1972, Boggs was killed in a plane crash. He is shown here with President Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960s.

sorry! Because if you're not their friend, you're Mr. Hoover's enemy."

It was right after that, that "the whole goddamned thing started," Gallagher said, meaning the FBI's witch-hunt against him. In August 1967, just weeks after Gallagher refused to blackmail Bobby Kennedy, *Life* magazine published an article tying Gallagher closely with the mob.

The Takeover of the Congress

Hoover's capo in the Congress was Deke DeLoach: "He would bring over tapes that they had on various Congressmen and say, 'We're your friends and we're in your corner,' but that meant that they owned them. It was tantamount to blackmail. He really was the number 3 guy in the FBI."

"If you were on the Appropriations Committee, which funded the FBI, or the Justice Department, you were in it! If you were on the Judiciary Committee, or in the top leadership, you came under their umbrella and under their threats.... The top three or four people on that Judiciary Committee, they were owned by Hoover."

Ultimately, Hoover & Co. went too far, demanding that Gallagher resign from Congress. Cohn threatened: "If you don't resign, Mr. Hoover wants you out of Congress in seven days." If not, Gallagher's wife would be dragged through the mud, in another smear story in *Life* magazine. How he got them to back off is a story we should let Mr. Gallagher tell in his own words!

Boggs Calls for Hoover's Resignation

In April 1971, Rep. Hale Boggs met with Gallagher, telling him the repairman had found his phone bugged. The next morning, Boggs called for Hoover's resignation on the floor of the Congress.

"The time has come for the Attorney General to ask for [Hoover's] resignation. When the FBI taps the telephones of members of this body and the Senate, it stations agents on campuses, when the FBI adopts the tactics of the Soviet Union and Hitler's Gestapo, it is time, it is way past time, Mr. Speaker, that the present director no longer be the director. I ask again now that you have enough courage to demand the resignation of this man."

At the same time, Boggs pushed to reopen the investigations of the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King.

The Louisiana Congressman was close to New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison—the only law enforcement official in the United States who ever brought charges against anyone connected with the Kennedy assassination.² Garrison, like everyone else connected with the efforts to get to the truth about that terrible event, paid dearly: He was hounded and slandered, and driven out of office. But Boggs was convinced that the destruction of Jim Garrison was based on the fact that Garrison was *right*, that there *was* a conspiracy.

On April 10, 1972, a Federal Grand Jury indicted Gallagher on charges of conspiracy, perjury, and Federal income tax evasion.

Gallagher went to the floor of the Congress, and for the first time, put forward the details of the filth thrown against him under orders from Hoover, the origin of the *Life* magazine articles, the broad intimidation of Congress, and the incredible revelations that had been presented to his subcommittee regarding U.S. Army, FBI, and CIA abuses of the Constitutional rights of Americans.

He called for Hoover's resignation, or firing.

Six months later, on Oct. 18, 1972, a plane carrying Hale Boggs disappeared in Alaska.

Hoover died on May 2, 1972, just two weeks after

2. See Jim Garrison, *On the Trail of the Assassins, One Man's Quest To Solve the Murder of President Kennedy*, 1988.

Gallagher had gone before the House, calling for his resignation.

Boggs' courage inspired Reps. Allard Lowenstein and Frank Church to reopen the investigation of the Kennedy murder, leading to the 1975 Church Committee on Assassinations and 1976-1978 House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Congressman Lowenstein, Boggs' close collaborator, was shot and killed in 1980.

In his closing remarks of this interview, Neil Gallagher said: "I worry very much about what the hell's going to happen to this country, unless people become



"I worry very much about what the hell's going to happen to this country, unless people become aware of [the secret government]," Gallagher said. He is shown here with President Kennedy, in the 1960s.

aware of it. The frailty of civilization, and the ability to destroy it, is so widespread now. As long as people in the Congress don't raise these questions about the role of the secret government in America, or the secret governments in America; or the real role of the secret societies, in America—as long as there's no protection for them, they can be destroyed overnight."

What we see today in the immorality and dysfunction of our institutions of government can be viewed through the prism of those terrible events described by Neil Gallagher.

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