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# Conspiracy Watch: Teddygate

Was Hillary Clinton a twentysomething Machiavelli? A former Nixon staffer peddles the secret plot to make Ted Kennedy president." />

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**the conspiracy:** Most Americans mistakenly think that Watergate is synonymous with President Richard Nixon's abuse of presidential power. But the real scandal wasn't a Republican White House run amok. Rather, the true outrage was a Democratic Congress that used an investigative witch-hunt to cover up its nefarious effort to install Senator Ted Kennedy in the Oval Office. Among the "Camelot conspirators": Hillary Rodham, a suspiciously powerful and sneaky Watergate investigation staffer fresh out of law school.

**the conspiracy theorists:** Geoff Shepard, a former Nixon White House official with a 35-year-old chip on his shoulder and a new book to peddle, *The Secret Plot to Make Ted Kennedy President*. The Watergate-as-Kennedy-steppingstone idea has also been floated by Jerry Zeifman, former chief counsel to the House Judiciary Committee, who claims that Rodham and other Democrats sought to drag out the scandal to "enhance the prospect of Senator Kennedy or another liberal Democrat being elected president in 1976."

**meanwhile, back on earth:** Who cares, and why now? This new spin on Watergate sounds like a nonstarter. But never underestimate the potential for conservative radio and blogs to run with a wacky theory, especially one that discredits congressional inquiries into Republican high crimes and misdemeanors, and—even better—casts Hillary Clinton as a twentysomething Machiavelli and takes down Barack Obama's biggest senatorial supporter.

**Kookiness Rating:** (1=maybe they're on to something, 5=break out the tinfoil hat!)

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