

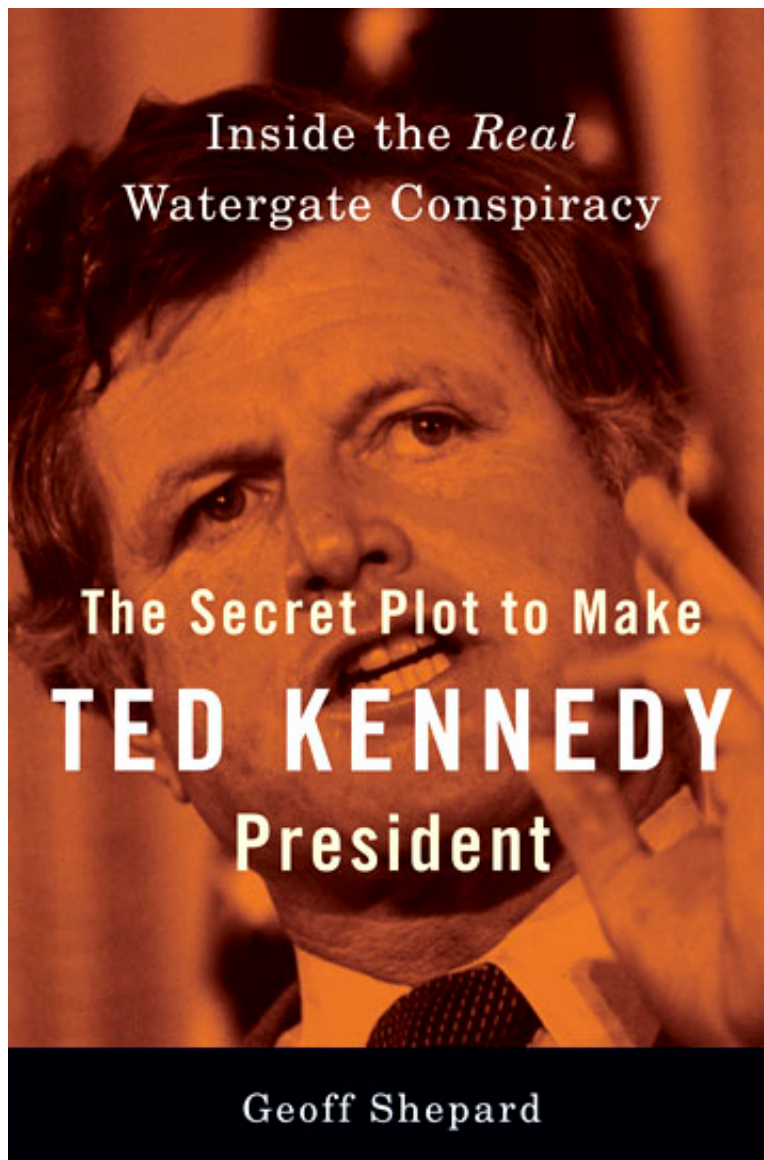
Washington Whispers

By Paul Bedard



Could Watergate Have Been a Plot to Get Ted Kennedy Elected President?

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Nothing says conspiracy like a party at Washington's [International Spy Museum](#). And that's where former Nixon staffer **Geoff Shepard** decided to promote his new book [Inside the Real](#)

[Watergate Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Make Ted Kennedy President](#), earlier this week at an event heavily attended by other ex-Nixon staffers.

Shepard admits the conspiracy theory title is a tad eyebrow-raising. "The title is preposterous unless you read the book," he says. "But when you read the book, it just shatters conventional wisdom about Watergate."

What the book does, Shepard tells *Whispers*, is that it "re-jiggers Watergate." It delves into the Kennedy Democrats' motivations for prolonging the scandal that ousted President Richard Nixon and makes Watergate look a lot more like Monicagate. "It's just like what they did with Bill Clinton," he says, pointing to the fact that most people, when looking back on Clinton's impeachment trial in the 1990s, feel as if it was politically motivated. "Isn't it funny that most people think Watergate was on the merits?" he muses. "And what my book says is no, no, no, it was exactly the same, they just did a better job of covering up the partisan politics."

And how does this all lead to getting Ted Kennedy into the White House? Well, that takes a bit more imagination, since Kennedy didn't run in the post-Watergate election in 1976. "It's a game of connect the dots," Shepard says about his secret-plot theory. "You could look at it and you could say: 'I don't go all the way, I don't go where he does, but I got to tell you, some of these facts are troubling.' "

After leaving the Ford administration for corporate law in 1975, Shepard stayed connected to his Nixon roots by getting together with a group of 80 or so public policy staffers. "We get back together to talk about public policy," Shepard says. One thing they don't talk about: Watergate.