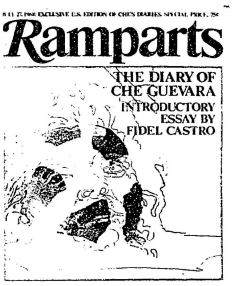
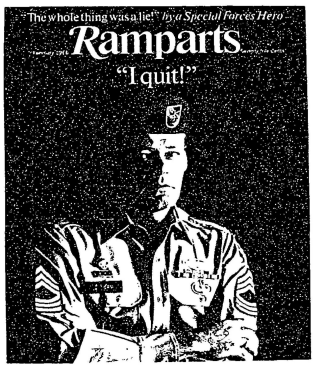
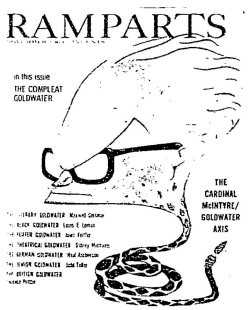
The Ramparts Story

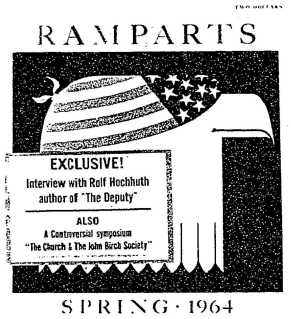
... Um, Very Interesting

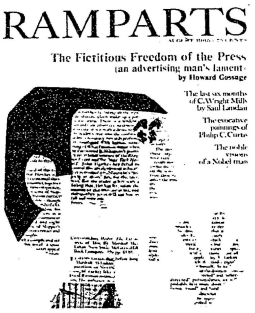
James Ridgeway











April 20, 1969

AFTER a rocky journey from a little liberal Catholic journal "with a circulation of 4,000 in 1964 to a big-time, slick, muckraking political magazine with 250,000 subscribers last year, Ramparts is in bankruptcy and struggling to stay alive.

The San Francisco magazine is trying to reorganize on a more modest scale so that it can continue. A May issue is on the stands right now, all 52 pages of it. But the financial pressures are severe, and the editors are finding it difficult to raise the $200,000 necessary for reorganization.

In January, Warren Hinckle 3d, the 30-year-old president and editorial director, resigned from Ramparts. He now heads a group of New York reporters who say they will start a publishing conglomerate called Scanlon's Literary House, Inc. Hinckle chose the "Scanlon's" name because he remembered people at a Dublin pub making derogatory toasts to John Scanlon, a slacker in the Irish Republican Army. The company will have offices in New York, San Francisco and Dublin. Pete Hamill, the former New York Post columnist, is to be the editor in residence in Dublin. Hinckle says his new firm will publish, beginning in June, a magazine called Scanlon's Monthly and devoted to muckraking, develop a subsidiary to distribute magazines to the college market, act as agent for authors wanting to publish books, and sell author's articles to big-time, high-paying magazines. Hinckle says he is assured of Si- million in investment funds. He is looking at an abandoned macaroni factory at the base of Telegraph Hill in San Francisco for a main office.

Robert Scheer remains as editor in chief of Ramparts. Scheer came out of the New Left in the middle sixties. He wrote against the Vietnam war, encouraged the Black Panthers to write articles and books, got the Cubans to give Che's diaries to Ramparts, and persuaded Donald Duncan, a Special Forces sergeant who had sickened of the Vietnam war, to set down his war experiences.

But Ramparts was scarcely a radical political magazine. What it did was to popularize for a wide group in the population trends and currents which the smaller left-liberal political magazines had been talking about for years. Viet Report had described how Michigan State University served as a cover for CJLA. agents working in South Vietnam. Nobody listened. But when Ramparts exposed M.S.U., it was a national scandal. A year ahead of Ramparts, Congressman Wright Patman had disclosed how the C.I.A. used dummy foundations to channel funds to various groups it wanted to support, and The Nation had picked up a story on his committee hearings. The Students for a Democratic Society had added to it, in one of their early pamphlets, telling how the National Student Association was a C.I.A. front. Nobody paid any attention. But when Ramparts took out an advertisement announcing its exposure of the N.S.A., the Government, from the President on down, rocked.

Scheer set the political line, but it was Hinckle's packaging and promotion that sold Ramparts. "I have no politics," Hinckle said recently. Then he added: "I hate magazines." His fascination was newspapering and he tried to run Ramparts amidst an air of continuing crisis, a sort of superagitated city room. In the end it was more like a wire service than a newspaper. The idea would be to wait past the deadline,

descend into a bar, rip up all the copy and rush to a telephone to talk to some would-be correspondent holed up in Bangkok or Stockholm. On the spot, this lucky person could dictate his story to Hinckle who then would rewrite it. Everyone at Ramparts admired Hinckle's ability to rewrite stories, which he often did at 3 A.M.

Hinckle gained a reputation as a character as well. The millionaires who bankrolled' Ramparts were always impressed by the way he spent money, taking them to lavish luncheons and entertainments and paying for the whole with their own money. Hinckle always flew first class on planes. In New York when he could not get a taxi, he hired a private car to make a short trip in the city. Once he was stranded in Chicago during a domestic air strike, and refusing to take train or bus to New York, instead flew to London, and from there to New York.

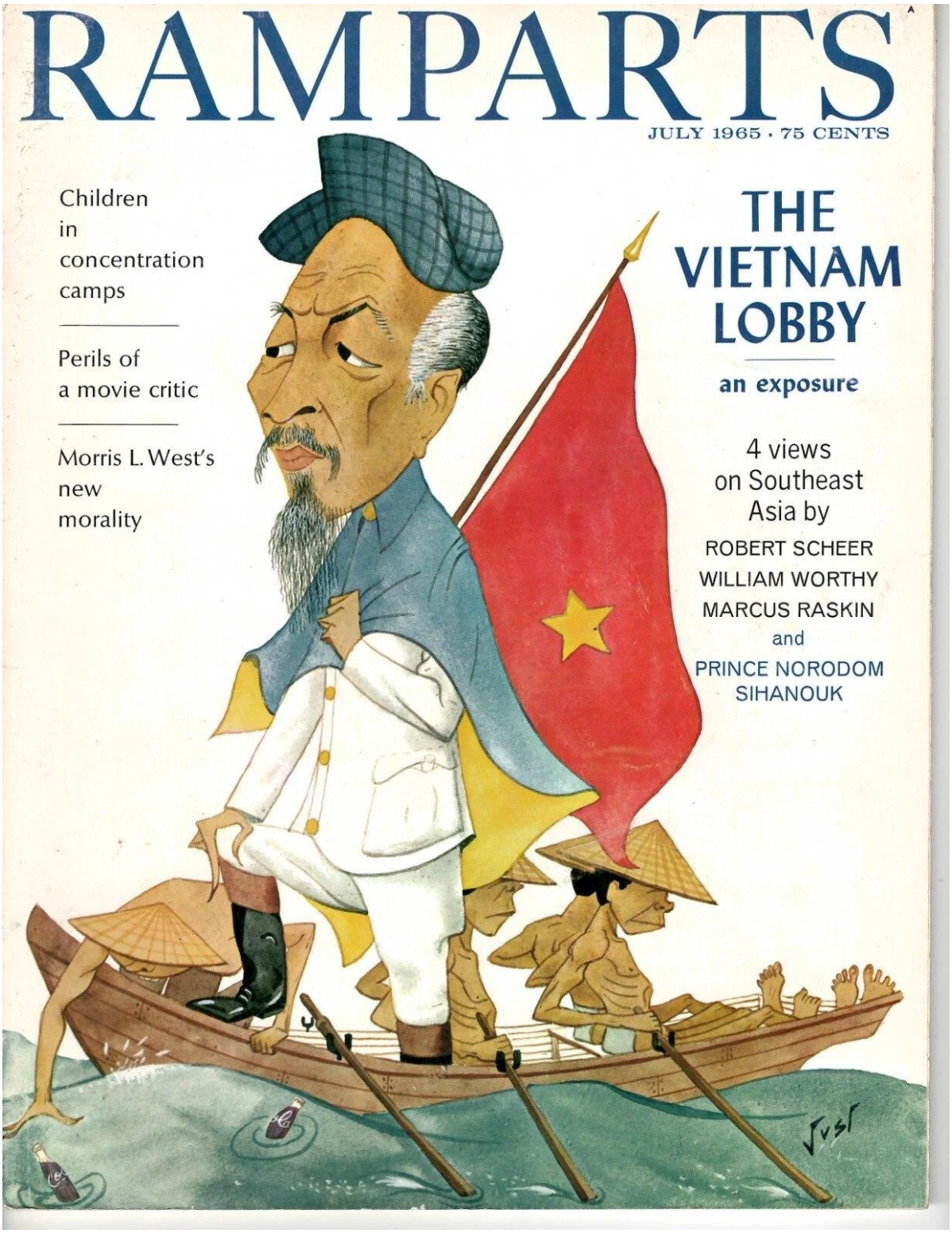
Shortly after Ramparts made the papers with its C.I.A.-N.S.A. expos6, Hinckle and Scheer held court in New York on a daily basis at the Algonquin Hotel. The lobby was clogged with all sorts of people waiting for an audience. There were eccentric millionaires who had somehow been trapped by Hinckle into thinking up plans for financing Ramparts through the purchase of supermarket chains. There was the man mumbling about the stock prospectus. One of the biggest Hinckle p.r. gimmicks was how Ramparts was just about to go public. The demand for stock in Wall Street was so extraordinary, he said, he just couldn't figure out what to do with all the money.

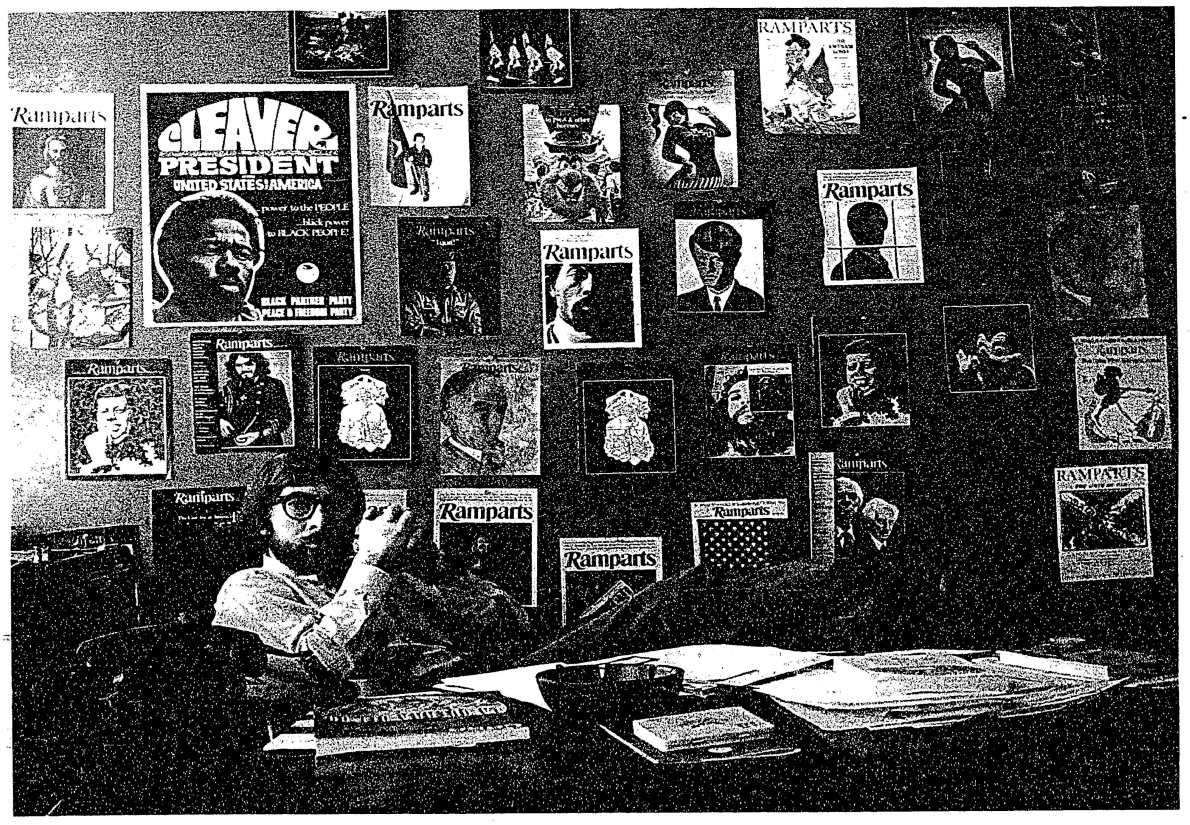
In the dining room Hinckle would be recounting his scheme for a publishing empire, expanding Ramparts, starting one, two or three radio and television stations, starting an authors' agency, setting up teams of reporters who would get the goods on L.B.J., NATO, the Pope, etc. Ramparts would publish books, set up book clubs, start a syndication. ... If one dared to ask where the money was really going to come from, Hinkle would fall back into his chair and suck on his grasshopper while Scheer lunged forward. "What's the matter?" he'd say. "Got no guts?" It was like a visit with Cohn and Schine.

And it was a long, long way from Rampart's beginnings.

EDWARD M. KEATING, a San Francisco lawyer who twice ran unsuccessfully for Congress as an antiwar candidate, founded Ramparts as a quarterly in 1962 with an eye to creating a vehicle for expression of independent Catholic thought. Keating says he is a crusader. Ramparts went right after the Catholics in the first issue: "You preach social justice and love for fellow men. But on racism, on poverty, on nuclear war, the Catholic Church stays comfortably silent, does little. You just don't want to rock the boat."

Keating did not have much of a background in publishing, and in order to put his new magazine on its feet, he bought a printing shop, hired advertising people to advise him on that score, and employed Warren Hinckle 3d, a man in his early 20's who sported a black eye patch, to draw up a promotion plan. Hinckle was a partner in a small publicity firm. As Keating remembers it, Hinckle produced the following scheme: Send him (Hinckle) to Washington for two weeks to beat the bush, then fly to New York, rent a hotel ballroom and throw a party for priests, leading Catholic laymen,


RAMPARTS
JULY 1965 · 75 CENTS
Children in concentration camps
Perils of a movie critic
Morris L. West's new morality
THE VIETNAM LOBBY
an exposure
4 views on Southeast Asia by
ROBERT SCHEER
WILLIAM WORTHY
MARCUS RASKIN
and
PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK
JUST



Muckraker. Sensational exposes (not all of them new), combined with hard-sell promotion and the glossiest techniques of the mass media, put Ramparts (left, some typical covers) into the big time—and $2-million in debt. So editor-in-chief Robert Scheer (below, in his San Francisco office) cheerfully adopted another technique of the system he attacks. As he explained to readers: "We entered into a reorganization plan under Chapter XI of the Federal bankruptcy statutes. This is one of those intricate mechanisms which American capitalism has provided for its own renewal and we don't feel the least corrupted for having availed ourselves of its privileges."
Photographs by SAM FALK

UP AGAINST THE WALL

The Ramparts Wall Poster

COMPLETE CONVENTION COVERAGE

LBJ'S TAKEOVER PLOT

CHICAGO. Mayor Richard Daley, the convention holdout whose endorsement is considered pivotal, has told close associates that he wants to lead a suprise drive to renominate President Lyndon Baines Johnson. Daley huddled with Jack Valenti (over)

SCOOP?—During the Democratic convention in Chicago, Hinckle decided he had uncovered a scheme whereby Mayor Daley would break a deadlock by bringing forth Lyndon Johnson as candidate. This headline resulted. Hinckle says it may have broken up the plot before it was hatched.

editors, reporters, their women, models and, for extra attention, a few movie stars. Keating says he was affronted by this idea. He desired to launch a serious intellectual endeavor, not a stunt. He dismissed Hinckle.

Shortly thereafter Hinckle's publicity company went on the rocks. He got a job as a reporter for The San 'Francisco Chronicle. There the city editor sent him along to cover stories about a citizens' campaign to save the trees that were threatened by freeway expansion. The job turned out rather well from Hinckle's point of view. He was leading the citizens' campaign to save the trees, and consequently spent most of the time writing stories about himself making speeches.

On weekends, Hinckle wrote publicity blurbs to make extra money and, in that capacity, he again approached Keating, and on a small scale began to help him with the advertising, promotion and editorial design of Ramparts. He wrote an article on J. D. Salinger. Eventually, Hinckle was employed full time by Ramparts, and in 1964 he became executive editor and associate publisher. In fact, he was running the magazine.

In October, 1964, Ramparts switched from being a quarterly to being a monthly. Hinckle hired a new art director, Dugald Stermer, who redesigned the magazine and created the style which became identified with it.

About the same time, Hinckle met Robert Scheer, then a recent graduate student from Berkeley who was selling books at City Lights in San Francisco. (They met through their wives, both of whom worked in the financial district.) Hinckle became interested in a pamphlet on the "Vietnam Lobby" that Scheer had prepared under a grant from the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. The pamphlet described the machinations and interests of a group of powerful men who, he claimed, promoted the Vietnam war. They ranged from Joseph Kennedy and Cardinal Spellman to the New York promotion expert Harold Oram. Hinckle took the pamphlet and rewrote it in a flashy style. The story—published in the July, 1965, issue —was Rampart's first splashy expose, and staked out its position against the Vietnam war. Soon thereafter, Scheer joined the staff, initially with the title of foreign editor.

MEANWHILE, Hinckle himself was developing the promotional style which was so much a part of Ramparts. Early in 1964, for example, he ran a story by Judy Stone, a San Francisco Chronicle reporter, about "The Deputy," Rolf Hochhuth's play attacking the Catholic hierarchy for not having acted to stop the murder of Jews during World War II. At the time, there was a protest against playing "The Deputy" in New York. Hinckle persuaded Keating to fly to New York, and together they held a series of press conferences at which Ramparts defended the play's right to be heard. Television and the papers carried Hinckle's and Keating's statements.

Hinckle knew where to pick up help in pushing the product, and he now received a good deal from Marc Stone, a New York public-relations man, who is a brother of both Judy Stone and of I. F. Stone, the Washington political reporter. In the summer of 1964, Ramparts prepared a special issue devoted to articles and pictures about the murder of three civil-rights workers in Philadelphia, Miss. The issue was to be called

"Mississippi Eyewitness," and the lead article, by Louis Lomax, was supposed to name the names of the killers. Hinckle asked Stone to handle the publicity in New York.

Stone called reporters, telling them that Ramparts was about to appear with a special issue on the murders, revealing the names of the killers. He arranged for press conferences, interviews and television appearances.

The time for the issue to appear came and went and nothing happened. Stone became embarrassed. Finally, Hinckle pulled into New York and Stone went to meet him at the Gotham Hotel, where the Ramparts crowd was staying.

"I go up," Stone remembers, "and I walk into the room and there.are a bunch of kids, guys and gals, sitting around with bottles open, in their shirt sleeves, and a couple of typewriters going. I meet Warren and ask him what they're doing. He says: 'We're writing the issue.* I say: 'Where's the piece?'

"Hinckle avoids that, and says there's a great piece by Dr. [David] Spain and a couple of other people. I say: 'Well, this is all just great. But where are the names?' And he says, 'Well, uh, er, uh, Louis Lomax . . . he's in a hotel room in Los Angeles and he won't answer the phone.' '*

Stone was getting pretty upset. Finally he asked if Keating was around and Hinckle said Keating was down in Washington negotiating with a printer to print the issue.

Stone says: "A couple of days went by and I kept stalling, and then word came that the printer in Washington wouldn't print. By this time, Lomax had finished the piece and sent it to Washington to the printer. And the printer said no soap. He wouldn't print the names. I hadn't yet seen the piece. I think it was a lot of junk. I don't think there were any names in the piece.

"So we weren't going to print the names. So I had to figure out how to get off the spot with the press people in New York. I had tentatively called a press conference, and I'd arranged to be on 'Open End.' So we concocted a story between us, Warren and myself. We decided, we said, that we knew the names but we weren't going to print them and we wouldn't tell the authorities unless the F.B.I. guaranteed us that they would give 'lifetime' protection to our witnesses. Now this was a pretty safe thing to say— because, you know, 'lifetime' protection. ... So we wrote a press release and called a press conference for a Sunday morning. After we wrote the release, a Mississippi grand jury indicted some people and we decided we had a little better thing to go with.

"We were going to take the position at the press conference that we were prepared to offer the Justice Department a deal: We would give them the witnesses if they guaranteed the 'lifetime' protection. But now, in the light of the grand-jury action, we wouldn't even do that.

"We went into a press conference with that kind of story and, you know, we got away with it. We got all kinds of publicity, radio, television, 'Open End.' The Times gave us a good story. We were off and running. That's when the Ramparts bug bit." S TONE had a streak of good luck in promoting Ramparts. The Times picked up a stale interview from the January, 1965, magazine with Senator Frank Church about his views on the Vietnam war, and that put Ramparts in the news two days running.

In 1966, Scheer persuaded Donald Duncan, the Special Forces ex-sergeant, to put down in writing why he had left the military. "I got into the act," Stone remembers, "when they called me and told me about it. And I said: 'Is this guy on the level?' You know, I suspected a leftwinger here somewhere, with a background that wouldn't stand up. But they said: 'No, he's clean as a whistle.' " Finally persuaded that Duncan could not be made to look like a masquerading pinko, Stone hustled him along to Washington, where he introduced him to a New York Times reporter in a hotel room.

The day The Times ran this story, Stone called a press conference to show off Duncan publicly to the other reporters. He recounts: "Now, this was the technique I used all the way through. And I got a lot of hell. It was really a dirty technique in a sense. But, on the other hand, with the kind of stories that I've been handling, if you make The Times, you're made. If you don't make The Times, you've got a tough fight. Any time I can get a good break in The Times, The Times can have an exclusive."

Not long after the Duncan story, Ramparts printed its M.S.U. expose. Stone flew to Detroit to ballyhoo this one. He arranged for a press conference there. But, at the last minute, Hinckle and Scheer could not come. Stone was fit to be tied. In the middle of the night, he thought up a way out. He set up a table at the end of the meeting room, and arranged a conference call to the Ramparts editors so the reporters could ask them questions. The M.S.U. story made all the papers.

On the 1966 anniversary of President Kennedy's murder, Ramparts put out a piece featuring "mysterious deaths." This was a re-do of materials collected by Penn Jones, editor of The Midlothian Mirror, a small Texas paper, tracing out leads on the Kennedy murder. Jones had discovered that about a dozen people who had some particular knowledge of the day's happenings had died. Was there some connection, a common thread, among the deaths? They ranged from the apparently accidental killing of a newspaper reporter who had covered the assassination for a Long Beach, Calif., paper by a detective who seemed to have been playing with his pistol, to the death of a stripper who had once worked for Jack Ruby and hanged herself in a jail cell. Finally, Ramparts speculated as to whether Dorothy Kilgallen, who had covered the Ruby trial, was in fact, the victim of a murder plot.

When the "mysterious deaths" story appeared, Stone, as usual, ran it right over to The Times—only, this time, he got it right back. There was a moment of despair, then the public-relations expert recovered himself. Stone called Hinckle and told him things were pretty dead in Washington—what with the President away and Congress out of session. Hinckle agreed, and the two of them staged a grandstand press conference in Washington. The "mysterious deaths" got in the papers, and Walter Cronkite used them on his TV news program.

Looking back on the "mysterious deaths" story, Scheer said recently that he felt it was pushing things a trifle far, and that perhaps it shouldn't have been run. Hinckle still believes it was a good "King Tut" story.

IN addition to handling Ramparts, Stone was doing publicity for the National Committee for a New Politics, a group of left liberals who were trying to stitch together a

THREE WHO BUILT RAMPARTS

Edward Keating (far left), self-described crusader, founded a liberal, independent Catholic magazine. Warren Hinckle 3d (left), whom Keating once fired and who later bounced Keating, turned it into a muckraking empire with the aid of credit cards and the promotional skills of Marc Stone (below).

working political coalition. (As it turned out, most of them ended up behind Senator McCarthy.) In that role, Stone met Michael Wood, a former member of the National Student Association. Wood told Stone he was wrestling with his conscience about whether he should tell a big story. Stone asked only that, should Wood decide to "spill his guts," please remember his other client, Ramparts. That was how Ramparts got onto the story of how the Central Intelligence Agency funded the N.S.A. and other student and university groups through a series of dummy foundations.

Like many Ramparts exposes, the key parts of the N.S.A. story already had been printed elsewhere. But Ramparts had a magic way with a story.

Wood told the story to Ramparts in the late fall of 1966. Nobody at Ramparts could keep a secret, and by Christmas it was cocktailparty scuttlebutt in San Francisco and New York. In Washington, competing reporters set to work to break down the N.S.A. and get the story before Ramparts could move. The N.S.A. learned it was to be exposed, and—as part of its counterstrategy— planned to announce it was severing ties with the C.I.A. But Ramparts decided to take no chances, and before either the N.S.A. or the competition could move, it ran full-page advertisements in The New York Times and The Washington Post announcing its expose. By the time the magazine's story appeared, the bulk of it had already appeared in the important dailies, and fresh revelations were pouring forth every day.

Keating financed Ramparts personally until 1965, when his money began to give out. (He is estimated to have invested about $800,000 in the magazine.) Moreover, by then, he was devoting most of his time to promoting a book he had written about the Catholic Church, called "The Scandal of Silence." Furthermore, he was under pressure from Hinckle to bring in other investors. Politely, it was to be a way to broaden control of the magazine. In fact, it was part of a scheme to ease Keating out of the picture altogether.

While there have been between 20 and 30 investors in the magazine's history, there were only a handful of people who made major commitments. The most important of these is Frederick C. Mitchell, who was introduced to Hinckle through Howard Gossage, a San Francisco ad man who is a friend of Hinckle's, in the fall of 1965. At the time, Mitchell was a graduate student in history at Berkeley. His specialty was Latin America.

Mitchell had inherited money from his grandfather, a thrifty lawyer from Erie, Pa. He was uneasy about it, and wanted to put it to some good use. So, he invested $100,000 in Ramparts in the fall of 1965; since then, he has committed another $600,000. In addition, he has secured loans and debts running close to a quarter of a million dollars.

Meanwhile, relations between Hinckle and Scheer, on the one hand, and Keating, on the other, were deteriorating. Keating spent a good deal of time on speaking tours in 1965, promoting his book, and in 1966 he ran — unsuccessfully—in the Democratic Congressional primary. As a result, the magazine was left increasingly in the hands of Hinckle and Scheer. However, the business staff tried to represent Keating's best interests, and it apparently was on the advice of the magazine's business staff that

Keating in the spring of 1967 sought to organize a directors' revolt and oust Hinckle That was a tactical mistake, for the other directors rallied to Hinckle's defense. Keating lost the fight, and quit — along with the business staff. Before Keating left, the magazine agreed to pay back his money over a period of years.

When the business staff resigned, there was minor chaos. The new controller, Robert Kaldenbach, could not get at the accounts because they were stored in a computer and the outgoing controller had taken the computer program with him. So Kaldenbach hired a bookkeeper and started a manual accounts system. In the middle of the job, Kaldenbach discovered the bookkeeper was forging checks. He fired him and hired a new assistant. But that didn't work out, either. The new man was caught pilfering petty cash.

Hinckle, who by turns was called editor, president and editorial director, stacked the board of directors with pliant businessmen. In their own right, these were shrewd men who had fought their way up in Wall Street or by way of cut-throat competition in the consumer markets. Yet they seemed mesmerized by the way Hinckle was spending their money — and he was spending it like crazy in an effort to get the circulation to 300,000, a point at which he believed the magazine would begin to become profitable. Every year the magazine lost $500,000. 'Tor Warren," one investor said admiringly, "money has no value." "You know," said another, "when I rode with Warren, it was the first time I had ever traveled first-class." IN carrying forward his work as a publicity man for the National Committee for a New Politics, Marc Stone became acquainted with Richard Russell, a successful Hartford, Conn., businessman who owns a large Pontiac dealership in Boston, and Martin Peretz, a Harvard professor who is married to an heiress. Both men are liberals. Both liked Ramparts because it was against the Vietnam war, and because it had exposed the university ties with the Defense Department and C.I.A. Stone introduced Hinckle to Russell and Peretz, and both became investors in the magazine and directors on its board. Russell invested about $100,000, while Peretz put up much lesser amounts.

Neither stayed with Ramparts for long. They broke away as the left-liberal coalition of which they were a part split up. In particular, Ramparts angered both Russell and Peretz by its position on the Israeli-Arab war of 1967. Scheer, in an editorial in the July issue that year, wrote: "To reduce the complex, tragic issues of the Israeli-Arab dispute to the simple good-guy, bad-guy standard equation of the American lexicon is to do both sides an enormous disservice. History forced its most horrible hour on the Jews, and no reparation can be enough. But the hallowed memory of Jewish lives taken by the Nazis is not served by continuing the plight of the Arab refugees. As it is unreasonable to deny the absolute right of the State of Israel to exist and use international waterways, it is equally unprincipled to maintain that all Arab claims are irrational and that they have no legitimate grievances in the Holy Land. There is no question that Arabs terrorized Israeli border communities, but it is also true that the Israelis discriminated against their native population."

Both Peretz and Russell say the magazine's position on the Israeli-Arab war was the end of the line for them. "To me Nasser was Hitler," Russell said. He resigned from the magazine's board of directors. Peretz, who walked out of a N.C.N.P. Chicago convention because of its pro-Arab line on the war, remained as a director, but became inactive.

(Ramparts editors believe they have created a new public in America for a kind of left-liberal journalism. But the magazine's power to do so lay with the old liberals, and when they tired of its political line, and pulled out their money and *expertise,* the downhill slide began. Peretz remembers how exciting Ramparts seemed at first, and then increasingly how he and his wife sickened of it. The magazine was too much "of the culture" it posed as attacking, Peretz says.)

Meanwhile, Ramparts was straining to become a miniconglomerate engaged in projects of the kind Hinckle is now talking about for his new Scanlon's enterprise—campus magazine distribution, book publishing, book clubs, even newspapers. He contracted with McGraw-Hill to expand Ramparts' C.I.A. materials into a book. The advance was $7,500; the cost in staff time has run to more than $25,000, and the book has not yet been published. A collection of Eldridge Cleaver's Ramparts articles, with a foreword by Scheer, actually has been published by Random House. (The $20,000 advance arrived just in time to meet a payroll.) Still another gimmick was a program designed, as Hinckle put it in a report to the directors, to lend out Ramparts' tax loss. Thus the magazine became a conduit— for a price—in various imaginative West Coast realty transactions for buyers and sellers seeking to limit their taxes.

LAST spring, in one more effort to hit the magic breakeven circulation figure, Ramparts turned itself into a biweekly, on the general theory that with a little bit more work by the staff newsstand sales would double. (Half the circulation has come from newsstand sales.) The staff was increased to more than 50 people.

With the biweekly schedule, the quest for fast-breaking news increased. The problem was that the printing schedule did not allow for any news of that sort. The publication usually closed two weeks ahead of printing, and since it was usually late, the printers never held to schedule, and the material was at least a month old before it got out. That didn't make any difference to Hinckle or Scheer.

When the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia last summer, the Ramparts editors decided to move fast to cover the big story. Scheer called Andrew Kopkind, The New Statesman's Washington correspondent, at midnight, Wednesday, Aug. 21, shortly after word of the invasion reached the United States. Scheer begged Kopkind to fly at once to Prague. Kopkind demurred. Scheer pleaded with him: It was a most important story; Kopkind should feel guilty for not wanting to go; it was important for the country, and for the left.

Finally, Kopkind agreed to go. He left Washington Thursday afternoon, arrived in Paris Friday morning, and got a visa. He rushed to Vienna, but found the border closed. He called Ramparts in San Francisco, and was told he must file 4,000 words by that Monday night for the deadline.

By luck, Kopkind discovered a night train to Prague, and quietly went aboard. The border guards, still Czechs at that time, let him through. Sunday morning, he reached Prague. The city was occupied and the leaders were away in Moscow. Kopkind wrote his story, fought for position on the one Telex machine operating in the city, and began to transmit the story via Hamburg Monday night. It took him 12 hours to file the whole thing. The story appeared nearly a month and a half later.

Ramparts has never paid Kopkind for the article, which was featured on the cover, nor has it paid $350 of his expenses ($100 of which he lent to a girl stringer at the request of the magazine's managing editor, Lawrence Bensky, who has since left). The magazine ran up a $750 bill for Telexing the copy, and it did not pay that. When Kopkind asked for some money, the magazine responded by sending him a check on a Japanese bank. Ramparts told him in advance it would bounce. It did.

"We didn't get any value out of Andy," Scheer said recently, in explaining why Kopkind never got paid. Besides, he added: "We didn't have any money."

AMPARTS had always had trouble meeting deadlines and the biweekly schedule made things even worse. But deadlines were essential to newsstand sales, for once the magazine broke the deadline, the distribution schedule was upset. Ramparts furiously tried to make up time, by working printers over weekends (at $3,000 per weekend) and airfreighting copies to nev/sstands (at a cost of about $4,000 per issue). Even so, newsstand sales dropped — from 125,000 to 60,000 an issue.

The biweekly schedule also meant that subscriptions ran out sooner than they would have on a monthly schedule. Readers who had paid $8.50 for a year's subscription to Ramparts as a monthly were now asked -to resubscribe to a biweekly at $15 a year. Subscriptions fell off on this score alone, and the magazine did not have the promotion money to build the list back up. Ramparts' most valuable asset was its subscription list. At the peak of the magazine's popularity, after the C.I.A. story, it totaled 120,000 names; in recent months, the list has totaled about 60,000. Still it is in hot demand by everyone trying to build circulation lists. It outdraws all the other lists for liberal or middle-of-the-road publications. The people who subscribe to Ramparts spend money like water.

The editorial operation grew more chaotic. Fred Gardner, a senior editor who had been brought in when the staff was expanded to put out the biweekly, asked Hinckle for a week off during last August in order to help Tom Hayden, the former S.D.S. man, publish a small newspaper for the demonstrators who were expected to converge on Chicago for the Democratic National Convention. Hinckle thought that was a great idea; he told Gardner that Ramparts would publish the paper — a revolutionary paper, just like in Paris when the students revolted during the spring. Hinckle was so taken with the scheme that he determined to produce the paper electronically, like The Wall Street Journal, and have it appear simultaneously in San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Like a lot of other things that happened around Ramparts, that great idea was soon forgotten^ and shortly before the convention opened Gardner and a handful of other

Ramparts reporters put together a one-page paper, called The Ramparts Wall Poster. Gardner arranged for a typesetter and printer, as well as for distribution. The first couple of issues came out, carrying news about demonstrators and police, along with a smattering of convention and political news.

Then Hinckle blew into town in the middle of the convention, and promptly fired the typesetter because he was "too slow." Friends at Playboy suggested he use their typesetter, and Hinckle hired him. But, for unclear reasons, that typesetter was unable to perform, so Hinckle and his entourage, who were staying in a 10-room suite at the Ambassador Hotel, used typewriters for type and blew up the headlines to fill up most of the page. Gardner quit.

Hinckle complained that the "movement" people were devoting the paper to the police and demonstrations. He wanted to get inside the political stories, the real professional stuff. To this end, he ran a story he had picked up by eavesdropping on a conversation during dinner. On the basis of what he overheard and what he could piece together by scouting about the hotel lobbies, Hinckle believed there was a plot afoot whereby Mayor Daley would break a convention deadlock by bringing forward Lyndon Johnson as the nominee. Hinckle had it on high authority that Marvin Watson was in town with a bunch from Johnson's staff. That furthered his suspicion, and he determined to break the scheming wide open by running a 185-point headline in The Wall Poster. It said, "LBJ'S TAKEOVER PLOT." Hinckle believes The Wall Poster story very probably broke up the plot before it was hatched.

The Chicago operation cost Ramparts $50,000 in direct costs. That included $10,000 for the hotel suite.

The financial picture at Ramparts grew more bleak after Chicago. Hinckle could not raise money. At one time, he briefly hoped for a recovery on the newsstands when a person approached Ramparts* New York office with a story of how she had changed sexes in Czechoslovakia while an agent for the C.LA. Hinckle saw the possibilities of an article about a transsexual spy, and he sent his ace C.LA. reporters rushing from Boston to New York. But the story didn't pan out.

Things grew worse, and finally in January Hinckle proposed to the directors that the magazine be bankrupted. That would free the staff to start a new one. The directors disagreed, and Hinckle resigned, announcing his plans to begin Scanlon's Monthly. When bankruptcy came anyway, last month, Ramparts' petition for reorganization included among $2-million ot debts, $50,000 owed to writers and staff (including $805 to Eldridge Cleaver), more than $40,000 owed to the Internal Revenue Service, and an unpaid telephone bill of $19,000. Looked at one way, Ramparts was a historical accident. It was begun in San Francisco by liberal Catholics at a time when the revolt in the church was developing. For that reason alone, it drew attention to itself. It also could not help but reflect some of the gusto of San Francisco in recent years. It attacked the Vietnam war in 1965 and 1966 when the antiwar movement was gathering momentum, and when briefly there was a chance of creating a left-liberal coalition. Its money dried up as that coalition disintegrated and politics polarized.

Ramparts went big, busted big and maybe will come back big. The magazine used the culture it attacked to create a mass market and as a result has very nearly been consumed by that culture.

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