

Fitting Pieces Into Watergate Puzzle

By Jack Anderson

Sources close to the Watergate investigation have put together for us a few more jigsaw pieces in the puzzle. Here are the latest fascinating facts which investigators have established:

- Presidential counsel John W. Dean III, despite vigorous White House denials, lied to FBI agents when he claimed not to know whether Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt had a White House office. This is spelled out clearly in FBI reports which have now been circulated outside the FBI. So many people have read the reports that acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray had no alternative, under oath, but to agree that Dean "probably lied." It is a federal violation to make a false statement to the FBI.

- Both Hunt and Gordon Liddy, another White House consultant convicted of Watergate crimes, indiscreetly mentioned several big names to their co-conspirators. Although Hunt and Liddy had direct contact with the White House inner circle, their five-man wiretapping team had no access to the likes of John N. Mitchell, John Dean, Jeb Magruder and Charles Colson. These bigwigs' link to the illegal activities, therefore, is now strictly hearsay. Investigators have a better circumstantial case, against Magruder than the others, though he has de-

nied under oath any advance knowledge of the burglary-bugging operation.

Obsessed

- Aside from this name-dropping, the conspiratorial Hunt and Liddy, whose direct testimony could implicate the higher-ups, always followed the old CIA rule: "When three people know a secret, it is an open record." Investigators describe Hunt as a CIA-trained professional sworn to keep his mouth shut. Liddy is regarded as eccentric, with an obsessed sense of mission. Of the two, Liddy was most inclined to brag and drop names.

- The funds for the Watergate break-in and bugging were distributed by Hunt, who always dealt in cash. After his cohorts were caught at gunpoint inside Democratic Party headquarters, he continued to dole out cash to pay the legal and living expenses of the defendants. But thereafter, Hunt's superiors never contacted him directly but delivered money through his wife, Dorothy, who was killed in a Chicago airliner crash with \$10,000 in her purse. She would receive cryptic instructions by telephone, then would pick up money from go-betweens. A reluctant conspirator, she told her husband not to trust the telephone promises.

Contact With Nixon

- James McCord, the member of the Watergate conspir-

acy who is now talking, worked with the White House staff as a CIA agent. One source told us McCord's CIA activities brought him into direct contact in the 1950s with Richard Nixon, then the Vice President. McCord has acknowledged that he was hired as President Nixon's security chief for the 1972 campaign through his old White House contacts. Investigators describe McCord as solid, honest, intensely patriotic, with an almost fanatic hatred of communism.

- Despite an outward appearance of amity, Hunt and Liddy were jealous of each other, each vying with the other to bring off more spectacular coups. In currying favor with the White House, Liddy aimed to please his patron, presidential counsel Dean, while Hunt was anxious to gain the plaudits of Charles Colson.

- McCord, a pragmatic, ex-FBI man, has confided to his friends that he is disappointed with the Senate committee investigating the Watergate. He had hoped Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), the chairman, would put off the session with Ervin absent. Instead, it was left in the hands of Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.). McCord had gone to the unusual extent of preparing a memo that carefully distinguished between what he knew of his own knowledge and what was

hearsay. But senators' meandering questions clouded the important distinction and McCord wound up being unfairly criticized for giving hearsay testimony.

- McCord has acknowledged that he was promised executive clemency and financial support for his family if he would plead guilty and keep quiet about his involvement in the Watergate crimes.

Phone Fun

Federal employees who hear that telltale "click" on their telephone may find Big Brother on the line. The Federal Telecommunications System, run by the General Services Administration, has a telephone sampling system that is pushing some civil servants even closer to the brink of telephone paranoia.

An internal government memo says GSA operators are authorized to intercept calls "for sampling purposes." Any questions asked by the operators must be answered. Thus, a federal employee in Washington may suddenly be surprised by a voice breaking in on his call to Denver or San Francisco.

A GSA spokesman assured us in the strongest possible terms that the "sampling" is merely to determine what percentage of calls are made by each agency, not to monitor the calls of individuals.