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by JACK ANDERSON

WASHINGTON — The Watergate "Mission: Impossible" team, which was arrested inside Democratic party headquarters on June 17, 1972, broke into the premises three weeks earlier during the Memorial Day weekend.

This previous espionage mission has been described to a federal grand jury by James McCord, President Nixon's erstwhile campaign security chief, who confessed he bugged Democratic official Spencer Oliver's telephone while others photographed party documents.

The Memorial Day break-in was staged by eight men, three more than were caught at gunpoint in early hours of June 17. Asked how many actually entered the Democratic lair, McCord told the secret panel: "Seven Cubans and me or I. I think that's correct."

"And do you remember the different functions that were performed by any of the different people?" he was asked. "I mean, what were they doing? Could you tell us that?"

"My function . . ." explained McCord, "was electronics, while Mr. (Bernard) Barker went through various and sundry files, and he and some of the others picked out certain material to be photographed. It seems to me that Barker helped set up, or one

of the men helped set up, the photographic pieces of equipment to take pictures. . . .

"And Mr. (Frank) Sturgis and two or three of the others were generally the lookout men, so to speak. Keeping an eye on the guard, if he were coming out, or anyone else that might come into the office. The other Cubans, generally, seemed to be supporting Mr. Barker in the photographic operation."

He was asked how long they stayed inside. "It seems to me," he answered "that we were in a couple of hours. It may have been a little less than that, about an hour and a half."

Going into more detail, McCord testified: "As best I recall, the others went in first, went through the front door. And I got a call, I think from (Howard) Hunt, as best I recall, by telephone from his office at the Watergate Hotel, which conveyed the message that, in so many words, that the men were inside and I should go ahead and join them."

"So I came up the backstairs from the basement, which were taped, and came up to the back door, and I think Frank Sturgis let me in the back door."

The prosecutors wanted to know how the other conspirators got in the front door. "Well," said McCord, "I wasn't there, but my understanding was that a locksmith opened the lock or otherwise they jimmed it."

Earlier McCord told the grand jury he had purchased the bugging devices in Chicago. Seymour Glanzer, an assistant U.S. attorney, showed him an electronic device.

"Mr. McCord. . .," said Glanzer, "I want to ask you, sir, if this is one of the devices that you purchased from Mr. Stevens of the Stevens Company in Chicago?"

"I can say that it looks like it," agreed McCord. "It's about the same size. I can't positively identify it, because there's no serial numbers on it, but it has a very close appearance and I would guess it was the same."

"I see," said Glanzer. "And does it resemble the one that you

placed upon Spencer Oliver's phone?"

"It does," testified McCord.

After the June arrest, McCord got rid of most of the incriminating equipment. He explained to the grand jury: "Some of that equipment I had

stored in a sort of wooden cabinet, along with a lot of other electronic parts that had been purchased, and these were stored in a closet near the laundry room, in my home. . . . Like some people have a carpentry workshop, I have a bit of an area there where I kept some of the electronic equipment.

"So I took all of it and, essentially, I wanted to get it out of the house, and I took that equipment and stashed it either out on a country road — those two country roads — except for some of the things which I tossed in the Potomac. . . ."

He didn't have the heart, however, to throw out the expensive items. "The receiver and the walkie-talkies," he said, "were the most expensive items of equipment, and I knew that weather would destroy them very, very quickly and they'd be completely out of commission, and so I thought, 'Well, I'll hold these and see what happens.'"

But he carefully removed the serial numbers from the bugging equipment, he testified.

The once taciturn, now talkative McCord had even more interesting things to tell the grand jury, which we'll report in a subsequent column.