



E. Howard Hunt Jr. during court break yesterday

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## DEFENDANT SEEKS TO PLEAD GUILTY IN BUGGING TRIAL

Judge Weighs Hunt Offer  
to Enter Plea on 3 of 6  
Watergate Charges

### PROSECUTOR GIVES CASE

Government Gives Details  
of Republican Effort to  
Spy on Democrats

By WALTER RUGABER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10—E.

Howard Hunt Jr., a onetime  
White House consultant who  
became a central figure in the  
Watergate affair, offered today

to plead guilty to charges that  
he conspired to spy on the  
Democrats last year.

Chief Judge John J. Sirica of  
the United States District Court  
here reserved a decision on  
whether to accept Mr. Hunt's  
plea until tomorrow morning.  
He could order Mr. Hunt to  
stand trial, and he warned the  
defendant that he was ac-  
customed to putting those who  
plead guilty in jail at once.

Mr. Hunt's attorneys said  
that he would plead guilty to  
conspiracy, to one count of  
second-degree burglary and to  
one count of wiretapping at the  
offices of the Democratic Na-  
tional Committee in the Water-  
gate apartment-office complex  
here.

The prosecutor implied, and  
Government sources subse-  
quently confirmed, that three  
other counts also charging  
burglary and eavesdropping  
would be withdrawn by the  
Government. Mr. Hunt would  
thus not appear at the trial.

#### Narrower Scope Unlikely

Lawyers for all six other  
defendants said that Mr. Hunt's  
move would have no effect on  
their clients' positions. Since

all were charged under the con-  
spiracy and related counts of  
the indictment, it appeared that  
the scope of the trial would not  
be reduced by Mr. Hunt's ac-  
tion.

The Government, outlining  
its case in detail for the first  
time, earlier told a jury that  
President Nixon's campaign or-  
ganization had paid one of Mr.  
Hunt's co-defendants \$235,000  
in cash for an "intelligence  
operation" last year.

#### Offer Ordered Delayed

The prosecution's opening  
statement was studded with  
references to paid spies in  
Democratic campaigns, to se-  
cret meetings in a Washington  
drugstore, to exchanges of many  
\$100 bills and to other details  
of its case.

William O. Bittman, an at-  
torney for Mr. Hunt, announced  
afterward that his client would  
offer to plead guilty to three  
of the six charges against him  
and that the Government had  
required him to delay the offer  
until after the prosecution's  
statement.

Earl J. Silbert, the principal  
assistant United States attorney  
here, said that the timing had  
allowed him to explain his case  
"so that all would know the  
facts uncovered by the inves-  
tigation."

Mr. Silbert said a second  
"condition" demanded by the  
Government was that there be  
no agreement on the length of

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sentence the prosecution would recommend to Judge Sirica.

Under the six counts of the indictment against Mr. Hunt, he could have been sentenced to a maximum of 35 years in prison. Mr. Silbert said that Mr. Hunt would be subject to a 25-year maximum sentence on just the charges to which he would plead guilty.

#### Future Questioning Possible

The prosecutor also told Judge Sirica that in agreeing to Mr. Hunt's plea he had warned that the Government would seek to call the defendant before a grand jury and question him extensively about the Watergate case.

Investigators said that by the time of a grand jury inquiry, Mr. Hunt presumably would be in prison and hence would be under some pressure to cooperate. If necessary, they added, he could be granted immunity from further prosecution and forced to testify.

While the offer to plead guilty followed immediately upon Mr. Silbert's two-hour statement to the jury, there had been rumors before the trial that Mr. Hunt would seek to do so. The plan was arranged about a week ago, Mr. Bittman said.

Mr. Bittman argued at some length that the judge could allow Mr. Hunt to remain free on a \$10,000 bond pending sentencing, which probably would not take place for several weeks or months.

Mr. Hunt has appeared white-faced and grim during the three days of the proceedings. Mr. Bittman pointed out that the defendant's wife had been killed in a Chicago plane crash last month and that he

had lost 14 pounds since then.

In addition, it was widely understood that Mr. Hunt, an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency for 20 years, had found the public interest in him to be extremely disagreeable.

#### A Puzzling Figure

In an earlier appearance in connection with a legal proceeding, the 54-year-old Mr. Hunt fled from reporters. He wore dark glasses and a hat low on his forehead on that occasion.

For those reasons, he remained by far the most enigmatic of the defendants. And as the author of more than 40 novels and as a supposed participant in many feats of derring-do, he perhaps remained the most fascinating of the seven.

Mr. Silbert, the 36-year-old prosecution, who wears his hair long at the back and peers at his notes through horn-rimmed glasses, stood at a lectern and began his description of the case at 11:01 A.M.

He began immediately to refer to the political aspects of the Watergate affair, but while he mentioned several officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, he attributed lawbreaking only to the defendants.

He said that G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House and Treasury Department official who became counsel to the campaign committee in December, 1971, had at first simply given legal advice to other officials. But toward the end of that month, Mr. Silbert said, Mr. Liddy met with Jeb S. Magruder, deputy director of the committee, and Herbert L. Porter, the scheduling chief, and from them received "two additional assignments."

The first, he said, was based on Mr. Porter's fear that "extremists" might try to disrupt campaign appearances by Cabinet officials and other prominent Republicans who were serving as surrogates, or stand-ins, for the President.

"Mr. Magruder and Mr. Porter turned to Mr. Liddy," the prosecutor said. "They gave him an assignment. He was to try to develop an intelligence operation by which he could find out in advance [any plans for demonstrations]."

#### \$100,000 Advanced

For that chore, Mr. Silbert continued, the Nixon advisers allotted Mr. Liddy \$100,000 on the assumption that he might have to pay 10 people in 10 states \$1,000 a month for 10 months.

A number of Republican leaders were also concerned with the possibility of protest demonstrations during their national convention, then scheduled for San Diego. Mr. Silbert said that Mr. Liddy was to "look into the problem" and discover any plans for hostile action.

In addition, the Government lawyer said, Mr. Liddy received certain other "special intelligence assignments" from the Nixon forces.

Mr. Silbert gave as an example a Republican request that Mr. Liddy "find out" about contributions made by a major polluter to a Democratic Presidential contender who was a prominent foe of pollution. Neither party was identified, but the candidate was thought to be Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine.

For his second set of assignments, Mr. Silbert said, Mr. Liddy was allotted \$150,000. He in fact finally received \$235,

000, the prosecutor said, all of it in cash, mostly \$100 bills.

The Republicans kept few, if any, records as to how the money was spent, Mr. Silbert asserted, and he told the jurors that the Government would be able to account for only about \$50,000 of it.

#### Friends Recruited

Mr. Liddy and Mr. Hunt were said to have embarked on a "recruiting campaign" to carry out the intelligence drive, and in doing so they turned "first to former friends." Many of these appear to have had C.I.A. connections.

The first was Jack M. Bauman, an ex-employee of the intelligence agency who received a letter from Mr. Hunt inquiring if he was available for "some work" and enclosing the "resumé" of an unnamed third party.

Mr. Bauman, who is retired and living in Winterhaven, Fla., was asked to "check out" the third party, a former C.I.A. agent said to specialize in locks, keys and photographic devices.

Mr. Hunt and Mr. Bauman met first on Dec. 28, 1971, and again at a later date in Washington. The Florida man, who was given four \$100 bills for his expenses, said he understood that the work "would involve establishing a security capability for the Republican party."

Mr. Silbert said that Mr. Bauman turned down the job.

Mr. Hunt then approached a "Mr. Stewart," otherwise unidentified by Mr. Silbert, and on Feb. 1 spent much of the day in Miami with Bernard L. Barker, a real estate agent who is one of the defendants.

Mr. Barker was said to have been interested in operations

"against the Democratic party and convention [and] certain of the party leaders," Mr. Silbert said. He was particularly interested in Lawrence F. O'Brien, then the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, the prosecutor said.

#### Luxurious Travel Cited

During the Democratic convention in Miami Beach, Mr. Silbert said, there would be a "communications center" on a houseboat in nearby Biscayne Bay and Mr. Stewart would work there.

Returning to his real estate office, Mr. Barker was alleged to have shown his visitor Democratic party records, unspecified by Mr. Silbert, that had already been "obtained."

Mr. Stewart also turned down Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt and Mr. Liddy were doing a substantial amount of traveling, and Mr. Silbert made a point of the luxury of it all. He asserted that they stayed in the best hotels, renting a \$100-a-day suite at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., on one occasion.

Mr. Hunt was finally successful in his recruiting drive, Mr. Silbert related, upon reaching Thomas James Gregory, now a 26-year-old history student at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Mr. Gregory, who is under a Government subpoena in the trial, was quoted by Mr. Silbert today as saying that he met with Mr. Hunt and agreed to work as a student volunteer for Senator Muskie in February.

Senator Muskie was then considered the front-running candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Mr. Silbert noted.

Mr. Gregory, the prosecutor noted, went back to Provo and

arranged to receive academic credit for "off-campus study," then returned to Washington and began to spy for Mr. Hunt.

#### Meetings Arranged

Mr. Gregory, who was said to have received \$175 a week for his services, would arrange to meet with Mr. Hunt once a week, usually on Friday and usually at a drugstore at the corner of 17th and K Streets, N.W.

At these encounters, Mr. Gregory would pass over an envelope containing information on Senator Muskie's sched-

ule, the contents of proposed speeches, and the details of any dissension among the Senator's advisers.

In April, when Mr. Muskie had been replaced as the front-runner by Senator George McGovern, Mr. Hunt told Mr. Gregory that he would be more useful working for the South Dakotan, the prosecutor said.

Mr. Hunt wanted the same information on the second candidate, Mr. Silbert continued, and he also sought data from the eventual Democratic nominee's mailing list and financial records.