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BY WILLIAM J. EATON  
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WASHINGTON, JAN. 12--A FORMER WHITE HOUSE AIDE WHO PLEADED GUILTY TO SIX COUNTS OF CONSPIRACY, BURGLARY AND EAVESDROPPING ON DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS SAYS HE THOUGHT HE WAS ACTING "IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF MY COUNTRY."

THE EXPLANATION WAS PROVIDED BY E. HOWARD HUNT JR., 54-YEAR-OLD AUTHOR OF SPY THRILLERS AND 20-YEAR VETERAN OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, AS HE LEFT THE WATERGATE TRIAL UNDER \$100,000 BOND.

UPSTAIRS IN THE COURTROOM OF FEDERAL JUDGE JOHN J. SIRICA, A COLLEGE STUDENT TOLD THE JURY THAT HUNT PAID HIM \$175 A WEEK TO BE A SPY IN THE PRIMARY CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS OF SENATORS EDMUND S. MUSKIE AND GEORGE S. MCGOVERN.

THE STUDENT, 25-YEAR-OLD THOMAS J. GREGORY OF BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY IN PROVO, UTAH, SAID HE RELAYD ADVANCE INFORMATION ON SPEECHES, CAMPAIGN OFFICIALS AND DEMOCRATIC CONTRIBUTORS TO HUNT, PLUS MUSKIE'S SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES.

VGREGORY RECALLED WITH A SMILE THAT HE ONCE DELIVERED \$120,000 IN CHECKS AND CASH SENT TO MCGOVERN TO A WASHINGTON BANK, THEN REPORTED THE ACCOUNT NUMBER AND THE NAMES OF SOME LARGE CONTRIBUTORS TO HUNT, WHOM HE KNEW AS "ED WARREN."

HUNT, WHO FACES A MAXIMUM SENTENCE OF 35 YEARS IN PRISON, SAID HIS GUILTY PLEA STEMMED IN PART FROM A DESIRE FOR LENIENCY BUT HE INDICATED HE HAD LITTLE TO TELL A FEDERAL GRAND JURY ABOUT OTHERS INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ESPIONAGE.

ASKED IF HE KNEW OF ANY "HIGHER-UPS" WHO DIRECTED THE BURGLARY-BUGGING ALLEGEDLY PERFORMED BY SIX MEN STILL ON

TRIAL, HUNT REPLIED: "TO MY PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE THERE WAS NONE."

UNDER QUESTIONING LIMITED BY HIS ATTORNEY, WILLIAM O. BITTMAN, HUNT TOLD REPORTERS: "ANYTHING I MAY HAVE DONE I DID FOR WHAT I BELIEVED TO BE THE BEST INTERESTS OF MY COUNTRY. AS A BELIEVER IN THE LAW I UNDERSTOOD THEN AND NOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING IT."

MEANTEIME, THERE WERE OTHER DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO THE WATERGATE CASE:

--THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FILED CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT NIXON, ACCUSING THE GROUP OF EIGHT VIOLATIONS OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ACT.

THE DEPARTMENT SAID THE COMMITTEE TREASURER, HUGH P. SLOAN, GAVE WATERGATE DEFENDANT G. GORDON LIDDY THREE CASH PAYMENTS TOTALING \$29,300 WITHOUT RECEIVING A RECEIPT. THE COMMITTEE ALSO FAILED TO REPORT THE PAYMENTS TO THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE. MAXIMUM PENALTY WOULD BE AN \$8,000 FINE IMPOSED UPON THE COMMITTEE. NO OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE---HEADED BY FORMER COMMERCE SECRETARY MAURICE H. STANS--WERE ACCUSED OF CRIMES.

LIDDY, DESCRIBED AS "THE BOSS" OF THE WATERGATE PROJECT BY THE U.S. PROSECUTOR, WAS GENERAL COUNSEL FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AT THE TIME OF THE BREAK-IN AT DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS. HE WAS FIRED FOR REFUSING TO TALK TO THE FBI.

--SENATE DEMOCRATS VOTED FOR FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE WATERGATE BUGGING AND ALLEGATIONS OF OTHER REPUBLICAN ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES. SEN. SAM ERVIN (D-N.C.), A FORMER JUDGE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SUPREME COURT, WAS SELECTED TO DIRECT THE INQUIRY.

--A WHITE HOUSE AIDE, EGIL (BUD) KROGH, TOLD A SENATE COMMITTEE THAT HE HIRED HUNT AND LIDDY IN 1971 TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF "NEWS LEAKS" WITHIN THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION



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TESTIFIED.

PROSECUTOR EARL J. SILBERT SAID IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT  
TO THE JURY THAT ANOTHER DEFENDANT, JAMES MCCORD, TRIED TO PLANT  
A "BUG" IN MANKIEWICZ'S OFFICE BUT DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME  
TO DO SO.

THE JURY WAS EXCUSED LATE YESTERDAY WHILE DEFENSE LAWYERS ETC.....