

Editorials

Count Lacking in The Indictment

THE INDICTMENT by a Federal Grand Jury in Washington of two former White House aides, along with the five men who had been arrested last June inside the Democratic party headquarters at the Watergate Apartments, carries this political whodunit forward to the next stage.

The charges of conspiracy to steal documents and to eavesdrop electronically on the Democrats are, after all, not altogether ignorable and readily brushed aside as politically motivated. Inasmuch as Attorney General Kleindienst pronounces them to have resulted from "one of the most intensive, objective and thorough investigations in many years," let us hope that he will proceed without fear or favor to see that justice is done.

FROM ALL WE CAN MAKE OUT of this summer-long scenario of suits and countersuits, claims and denials and injured innocence, there seems to be a count missing from the indictment, and that is a count charging stupidity.

Without any doubt, whoever ordered the team of burglars and buggers and locksmiths to enter the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate, install electronic pickups and steal documents from the party's desks is chargeable with conspicuously blockheaded decision-making, since the chances of finding or overhearing anything of any real importance to the GOP were practically nil. Even Democratic Chairman Lawrence O'Brien himself has pointed that out.

Of course, the source of this decision has not come out, and may never. But in the meantime, it can be said that the addition of E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy lends a bit of class to the cast of characters. Without Hunt, spy novelist, ex-CIA employee and Bay of Pigs veteran, and without Liddy, the ex-finance counsel to the Nixon re-election campaign, the list of the accused could hardly have been called high-level.