

Experts scoff at wiretap try in Demo office

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WASHINGTON — Wiretap experts Sunday described the attempted bugging of Democratic National Committee headquarters as one of the most unprofessional and bungled jobs they had ever heard of.

Based on descriptions of the bugging equipment confiscated by police and the methods used by the five intruders arrested early Saturday morning, these experts, many with years of bugging and debugging experience, called the job a Mack Sennett-comedy, a Mickey Mouse operation, and a blot of the bugging profession.

"This is fantastic," said one wiretapper. "That kind of (bugging) equipment went out with high-button shoes. These guys have got to be circus bums," he said.

The surreptitious and strictly illegal art of bugging and wiretapping is normally carried out by trained professionals who spend much of their time developing new and more sophisticated ways of snooping on other people's conversations.

These professionals, usual-

ly current or former government employes, private detectives, or electronics experts sometimes work for industrial saboteurs, the mafia, and other criminal clients. They can point to years of planting bugging devices in hotels, offices, and homes without ever getting caught.

It is to these professionals that a political party, or faction within a party, would normally turn for bugging services. The bugging experts interviewed Sunday claimed it has not been uncommon in elections past for this to occur, either before or after the party nomination, and they said it is particularly common for one candidate to bug another of the same party.

The purpose, they said, is to determine the strategy to be used by a candidate at the convention, to gather derogatory information on an opponent for possible disclosure to the press, or to ferret out real or imagined plots by one faction or another.

None of the experts admitted to knowing of any bugging attempts in the current campaign.

Police Sunday officially declined to describe the devices found at Democratic headquarters, but one police electronics expert who said he had examined the equipment said it included at least one transmitter consisting of a three-inch-by-five-inch printed circuit board carrying a transistor, a resistor, and several capacitors, as well as 6½-volt flashlight batteries wired in series to produce a total of nine volts of energy.