

# '71 Wiretaps On Ellsberg, Press Bared

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The White House received information in 1971 from previously undisclosed wiretaps on the telephones of Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg and former New York Times reporters Neil Sheehan and Tad Szulc, according to informed government sources.

Despite repeated demands by the judge in Ellsberg's trial that the government inform the court of any electronic surveillance of Ellsberg, the tap on his telephone was never disclosed.

The sources said that federal investigators are attempting to determine who ordered and executed the three wiretaps and why the judge was never informed of the Ellsberg surveillance. FBI records show no evidence of the existence of the three taps, the sources said.

According to the sources, the White House special investigations unit known as "the plumbers" regularly received transcripts from the taps on Ellsberg, Sheehan and Szulc for at least several months during 1971.

Members of the special unit, which was created by direct order of President Nixon, included E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, who were later convicted in the Watergate bugging conspiracy and who also supervised the burglary of Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office.

Transcripts from the Ellsberg tap, which was installed on his home telephone, were received at the White House as early as May, 1971, according to government sources. That is a month before The New York Times printed the Pentagon Papers, which Ellsberg had provided to Times reporter Sheehan several months earlier.

It is also a month before the White House has said

"the plumbers" were formed to investigate leaks to the news media.

The allegation that the White House received information from the Ellsberg tap in May is the first indication that officials there had a serious interest in the surveillance of Ellsberg be-

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fore the publication of the Pentagon Papers in the press. It has been reported previously that the FBI was investigating Ellsberg before publication of the papers.

One Justice Department source said that the White House "plumbers" also received some reports based on physical surveillance of Ellsberg's movements.

Although the White House has said publication of the Pentagon Papers in June, 1971, led to formation of "the plumbers," two White House aides—Egil Krogh Jr. and David Young—already were involved in an investigation of Ellsberg in May, according to government sources.

Krogh and Young both supervised the activities of "the plumbers," and reported to John D. Ehrlichman, then President Nixon's principal deputy for domestic policies. A spokesman for Ehrlichman said yesterday that Ehrlichman had no knowledge of wiretaps on Ellsberg, Sheehan or Szulc.

One source familiar with the work of "the plumbers" said that the unit "was getting daily reports on Ellsberg's home phone conversations for at least four months in 1971."

The transcripts routed to the White House from the taps of reporters Sheehan and Szulc were less regular and extended over a period of several months in 1971, according to two government sources.

The Sheehan and Szulc taps raise to at least seven the number of reporters allegedly tapped by the Nixon administration.

Previously, the FBI disclosed that four reporters were among 17 persons tapped from May, 1969, to February, 1971. Reliable government sources identified the four as New York Times reporters William Beecher and Hedrick Smith; Sunday

London Times reporter Henry Brandon; and CBS reporter Marvin Kalb.

In addition, government sources have said that former White House aide John J. Caulfield, a former aide to Ehrlichman, tapped the telephone of syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft in 1969.

Government sources said investigators are having difficulty tracking down information on the Ellsberg, Sheehan and Szulc taps. One source said: "It was at a time (1971) when both Caulfield and 'the plumbers' were operating... we have to check both. Then there is the possibility that it was another vigilante or free-lance operation of former (government) agents."

The Pentagon Papers case against Ellsberg was dismissed last month after it was revealed that the government had intercepted several of Ellsberg's conversations when he used the telephone of Morton H. Halperin, one of the 17 government taps.

The transcripts of those conversations were discovered in Ehrlichman's White House safe by the FBI last month although the prosecutors in the Ellsberg case had insisted that there were no government wiretaps of Ellsberg's conversations.

Halperin is a former aide to White House foreign affairs adviser Dr. Henry A. Kissinger. According to government sources, Kissinger at least indirectly ordered the taps on some of his staff members who could have possibly leaked highly classified material.

The federal sources said that they are unable to relate the Ellsberg, Sheehan and Szulc taps to the 17 taps that President Nixon said were "terminated" in February 1971, because the sources said they have information showing specifically that the three taps were in effect after February, 1971.

Last month, when acting FBI Director William D. Ruck-

shaus released a public statement on the missing records of the 17 wiretaps, he specifically said that "four were placed on newsmen as the potential recipients of leaks and 13 on government employees."

FBI sources insisted this week that the bureau has no information on the Ellsberg, Sheehan and Szulc taps. The FBI normally conducts all domestic wiretapping for the government.

In his May 22 statement on the domestic security operations of the White House, President Nixon made reference to the 1969-1971 wiretaps

by saying that "fewer than 20 taps of varying duration were involved," thus specifically not limiting the number to 17 as reported by Ruckelshaus.

The President also said that the publication of the Pentagon Papers beginning on June 13, 1971, "posed a threat so grave as to require extraordinary actions. Therefore during the week following the Pentagon Papers publication, I approved the creation of a special investigations unit within the White House—which later came to be known as "the plumbers."