

Watergate Called Part of Big GOP Plan

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More Phone Taps Charged

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Former Democratic National Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien said yesterday that the Watergate bugging incident was part of an elaborate, "Republican-sponsored" electronic surveillance effort that lasted for "several weeks" and included an abortive attempt to plant listening devices at Sen. George McGovern's former campaign headquarters.

At a press conference here, O'Brien also charged Attorney General Richard Kleindienst with "foot-dragging" in the investigation and prosecution of the incident.

Saying he had received information on "unimpeachable authority"—but refusing to name the source—O'Brien made these new assertions:

- His telephone and that of R. Spencer Oliver, executive director of the Association of State Democratic Chairmen,

were tapped for "several weeks" and "monitored on a regular daily basis."

- "Logs of conversations were kept and transcribed into memorandum form" from a monitoring station on the seventh floor of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, across from the Democrats' Watergate headquarters on Virginia Avenue.

- One purpose of the June 17 break-in at the Watergate

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was to adjust a "faulty tap" on O'Brien's phone and to install "a room listening device, or bug" in or near his office.

- On May 27, some of the same men later arrested in the Watergate incident "set out to plant electronic eavesdropping equipment in Sen. McGovern's former headquarters on Capitol Hill, at 410 1st St. SE, here in Washington. This mission was abruptly terminated outside the headquarters . . . by the presence of other persons in the area."

O'Brien, now national campaign director for Sen. McGovern, said that during the time his phone was tapped he "had conversations with perhaps every prominent Democrat in America, including every candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination."

From the phone tap and information revealed last week to have been photocopied from his files, "People could—out of context—develop some ideas that might be useful or helpful in a campaign," O'Brien said.

O'Brien said his new information was developed from the Democrats' own investigation of the Watergate incident but would not elaborate on who his unimpeachable sources were. Edward Bennett Williams, the Democrats' attorney, has assembled an investigative staff headed by Walter Sheridan, who was an assistant to Robert F. Kennedy when he was attorney general.

The White House, the Nixon campaign committee, and the Justice Department had no immediate comment on O'Brien's assertions.

In a related development, Williams yesterday filed notice that he will take sworn, secret testimony from 16 additional persons in the Democrats' \$1 million invasion of privacy suit against the five men arrested in the Watergate incident.

Included in the list are the Republican National chairman, Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.), and John Ehrlichman, the top domestic assistant to President Nixon.

In the notice to take depositions, Williams said the formal statements would be taken, one a day, from Sept. 12 to Oct. 2.

This virtually assures that the case will stay in the news for the rest of the month as well-known Republican officials appear at Williams' office. Every day until now, reporters have gathered to obtain comment from those questioned by Williams before and after making their secret testimony.

U.S. District Court Judge Charles R. Richey has ruled that all the sworn statements must be kept secret to protect the constitutional rights of the five men arrested in the Watergate incident.

Among the 16 asked to make sworn statements are White House aides William E. Timmons, head of congressional relations for the White House, and Egil Krogh, an assistant to Ehrlichman.

The following eight persons associated with the Committee for the Re-election of the President will also be summoned: Clark MacGregor, the head of the committee; Feb Magruder, Fred LaRue, Robert C. Odle Jr., Robert Mardian, a former assistant attorney general in charge of internal security; J.

Glenn Sedam, John J. Caulfield and Sally H. Harmony, the secretary to G. Gordon Liddy, the former finance counsel to the committee.

Liddy was fired June 28 for refusing to answer FBI questions about the Watergate incident.

In addition, depositions will be taken from Diane Konowski and Linda Jones, two secretaries at the Robert R. Mullen public relations firm. E. Howard Hunt, a former White House consultant who has been linked to the incident, worked as a writer at the Mullen firm.

Williams has also summoned a representative of the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. and the wife of James W. McCord Jr., one of the five men arrested inside the Watergate on June 17.

Hugh W. Sloan Jr., the former Nixon committee treasurer, also is on the list. Sloan was scheduled at first to give his deposition earlier this month, but it was delayed.

Williams has already taken depositions from right people, including John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general and until July 1 head of President Nixon's campaign, and Maurice H. Stans, President Nixon's chief fund raiser.

In another development yesterday, an argument broke out at the House Banking and Currency Committee meeting as Rep. Barry Brown (R-Mich.) said he was upset about leaks to the news media.

The Committee, headed by Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.), is conducting a preliminary investigation into financial transactions surrounding the Watergate incident — especially the \$114,000 of Mr. Nixon's campaign funds linked to the case.

Brown demanded of Patman: "I want assurance from you that nothing will be released by this Committee until we have a chance to see it. Damn it, that is something we should have."

"If any information from this report is given to the public or the press before we meet on it, I'm going to raise all kinds of hell," Brown said.

Patman, reportedly irritated, told Brown to state his complaints in writing. "We don't accept blabbermouth complaints," Patman said.

He said the staff study on the Watergate finances would be ready Tuesday and the Committee could meet again Thursday to discuss the matter and decide if a "full-scale hearings" will be undertaken.