

Silbert View Disputed By Watergate Figure

By Jack Nelson

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Alfred C. Baldwin III, an ex-FBI agent who monitored the Watergate telephone tap, has denied that he played any part in deleting his references to the "CIA" from a court record in the Watergate case.

The question of the deletions — actually the substituting of the initials "CRP" for "CIA" in a transcript of a Baldwin interview — has become an issue in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on the confirmation of Earl J. Silbert, the chief prosecutor in the original Watergate case, as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

The matter also raises a broader unsettled question of whether the Central Intelligence Agency, in fact, did have any part in the burglary and electronic surveillance of Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex.

Baldwin monitored some 200 telephone calls from a bugged phone in the Democratic headquarters. On July 5, 1972, less than three weeks after the Watergate break-in was discovered, he agreed to cooperate with prosecutors in return for a promise he would not be indicted.

Contradicting testimony by Silbert and his top assistant in the Watergate prosecution; Seymour Glanzer, Baldwin said Thursday in a telephone interview:

"There's no way I would have ever told them that I was saying 'CRP' (for Committee to Re-elect the President; instead of 'CIA.'"

Silbert and Glanzer told the Judiciary Committee that during the initial Watergate trial they advised U.S. District Court judge John J. Sirica that references to "CIA" in a transcript of a Baldwin interview with the Los Angeles Times should be changed to read "CRP." They said they so advised Sirica of that after Baldwin informed them that



ALFRED C. BALDWIN III
... monitored phone tap

the references should read "CRP" instead of "CIA."

Baldwin said Thursday he had never used the initials "CRP" in referring to President Nixon's re-election committee and therefore would have had no occasion to discuss substituting those initials for "CIA" in the transcript.

In the transcript, Baldwin and his two attorneys, who

were present for the interview discussed the possibility that the CIA was involved in Watergate and Baldwin said he would not rule out that possibility.

One of the attorneys, Robert Mirto, said, "there was a tremendous feeling on the part of the U.S. attorneys that there was a good possibility that this might have been a CIA operation."

Silbert and Glanzer told the Judiciary Committee that they realized they had misinformed Sirica on the "CIA" matter after Glanzer and Baldwin reviewed tape recordings of the interview, with them when they reviewed the tapes was Charles Morgan Jr., a Washington attorney who represented the Association of Democratic Chairmen, the target of the Watergate telephone tap.

When a committee member asked about the significance of changing the initials from "CIA" to "CRP," Glanzer indicated he was concerned that the Watergate defendants would inject a "phony" CIA defense into the trial.

He said, "There was a particular sensitivity on my part, particularly that the concept of the CIA responsibility for the intrusion into the Democratic National Committee should be placed on the shoulders of the CIA. And the reason for that was, I was concerned about the only viable defense that I thought could be interposed in that case, one that could cause a great deal of problems in the court room."

"And it turned out that it

was 'CIA' rather than 'CRP' and Mr. Baldwin so acknowledged to Mr. Morgan, in my presence, that he had made a mistake," Glanzer told the committee.

However, Baldwin denied ever discussing any aspect of the matter and Morgan denied he had ever heard such an acknowledgement from Baldwin:

"That's a bald-faced lie."

Morgan declared in an interview. "That's not the first time Mr. Glanzer and Mr. Silbert have misrepresented the facts about their handling of the Watergate case."

Morgan, director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union, has vigorously opposed confirmation of Silbert as U.S. attorney.

Glanzer, informed of Baldwin's denial, said, "Well, he may deny it, but that's what he did."

Told of Morgan's denial, Glanzer said, "I don't know what to make of it. I can't understand it."

Glanzer said he was "pretty sure" that Baldwin had also told Silbert that the initials should be changed from "CIA" to "CRP."

Silbert said he did not recall Baldwin ever mentioning the matter directly to him, but added that he recalled Glanzer telling him about Baldwin's comments during the trial in January, 1973.

The trial transcript shows Glanzer told Judge Sirica, "Incidentally, Your Honor, there are a few typos where it says CIA. It should be 'CRP.'"

At another point, Silbert told Sirica, "As Mr. Glanzer explained to you this morning, the initials 'CIA' should have been 'CRP.'"

At a judiciary committee hearing Tuesday, Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.), who opposes confirmation of Silbert, pressed Silbert and Glanzer on whether they had ever advised Sirica that they had misinformed him about substituting "CRP" for "CIA" in the transcript. Both said they could not recall.

Although the trial transcript includes no specific acknowledgement by the prosecutors to Sirica that they had erroneously informed him about the CIA matter, Silbert and Glanzer told the Los Angeles Times Thursday that they thought one of Glanzer's comments to the judge amounted to a correction.

That comment came two days after the prosecutors informed Sirica the initials should be changed. Glanzer told the judge that the transcript was "substantially accurate."

"There are phrases missing here and there, but the tenor of the remarks, the substance of the remarks are there," Glanzer said.