

THE AMAZING CONFESSIONS of Jerome Ducote, who says he led a series of illegal, Watergate-style political burglaries of union and peace group offices in California during the mid-1960s are shocking and depressing, to say the least.

According to Ducote, a former Santa Clara sheriff's deputy and former officer of the Young Republicans and the John Birch Society, he carried out 17 forays into the offices of the United Farm Workers and various left-oriented groups and individuals between 1964 and 1968 in an effort to discredit the union and the anti-war movement.

WORST OF ALL, Ducote claims that many of these illegal acts were requested by state and local agricultural officials and that police in Delano decided to ignore the burglary of UFW headquarters there after Ducote told them he was only trying to get pro-Communist evidence against union leader Cesar Chavez.

Some of the people who have been accused of sending Ducote on his seamy rounds have denied his accusations, and countercharged that he is "a liar," but Santa Clara law enforcement officials have confirmed that the 17 claimed break-ins did take place.

THE POLITICAL BURGLARIES deserve the closest scrutiny from law enforcement officials and those involved in the illegal, anti-democratic acts deserve the fullest punishment the law allows.