

REPUBLICANS

The Watergate Issue

It began as an odd, Bondian episode greeted with amused stupefaction in Washington. Now the Watergate affair promises to be the scandal of the year. Justice Department officials found that the receiving end of bugs planted in the Democratic National Committee's headquarters was located just across the street in two rooms in the Howard Johnson's motel. There members of the security intelligence squad of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President were clearing out their records and tapes minutes after the cops arrested the Watergate Five.

There were other iridescent traces leading to the C.R.P.: a possibility that the Watergate forces planned to plant incendiary bombs in the hall during the Democratic Convention, or conspired to have the hall stormed by paid Cuban exile mercenaries. The Administration maintained silence, although Attorney General Richard Kleindienst did venture that the bugging was "just about the stupidest goddam thing I ever heard of."

The incident has given the Democrats ammunition they could not



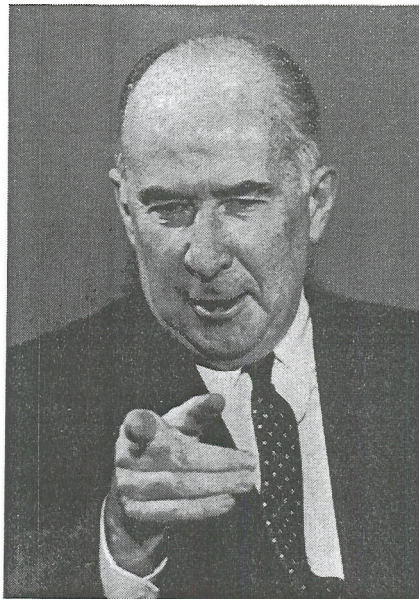
MARDIAN PHOTOGRAPHING PROTESTS
Iridescent traces.

have imagined for themselves. Larry O'Brien, the Democratic National Chairman at the time five men were arrested for possession of bugging devices at his Watergate headquarters, last week refiled his \$1,000,000 suit for violation of civil rights in Washington's federal district court. His attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, a crack criminal lawyer who is working on the case without pay, has asked for subpoenas requiring the principals named in the case to submit to questioning under oath this week. The aim is to preoccupy the Republicans in court during the fall and to keep the case in public view to sub-

vert the seemingly unstoppable G.O.P. campaign. The Democrats have been moving methodically. As O'Brien puts it: "This is an unprecedented case of political espionage. We have been very, very careful in every step we've made."

Care is the last thing the Republicans exercised. The great embarrassment began the night of June 17, when police arrested the five men as they tried to remove bugging devices from the Democratic headquarters. As the cops moved in, Justice Department officials have learned, the recording equipment in the Howard Johnson's motel was being hurriedly removed. One of the men arrested was James W. McCord Jr., chief security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President. The eavesdroppers across the street had apparently been assigned their tasks by McCord.

The intelligence squad grew out of



FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL MITCHELL

a team of so-called "plumbers," originally recruited by the Administration to investigate leaks to the media. They included G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House staffer and then attorney for the C.R.P.'s finance committee; Robert Mardian, a former assistant U.S. Attorney General and an official for the C.R.P., and E. Howard Hunt, a former White House consultant. The lead man in the Watergate caper was Bernard Barker, an ex-CIA agent. Federal investigators learned that \$114,000 from the C.R.P. had found its way into Barker's Miami bank account.

Early on the Justice Department discovered that \$25,000 of that money had been collected by Kenneth H. Dahlberg, the Republican finance chairman in the Midwest, who told the FBI that he had rounded up the cash from G.O.P. contributors early in April. The other \$89,000 apparently came through a Mexico City attorney, Manuel Ogarrio Daguerre. It is a matter of record that four bank drafts totaling \$89,000 all

bearing Ogarrio's name were deposited in Barker's Miami account.

As it turns out, one of Ogarrio's principal clients is the Gulf Resources & Chemical Corp. of Houston, Texas. The firm's president, Robert H. Allen, also happens to be chairman of the Texas finance committee to re-elect Nixon. Further, Nixon's re-election campaign in Texas is supervised by Robert Mardian of the C.R.P.

The Democrats are suspecting the best. They theorize that the Republicans might have fantasized a convention proposal that a new Democratic administration open dialogues with Fidel Castro, thus leaving itself open to attack in Miami Beach last month by anti-Castro Cubans. Although the Democrats grudgingly trusted Kleindienst on security measures, O'Brien and others were only too aware that he was Nixon's man. Still, the man they really want—because he is so closely tied with the Administration—is former Attorney General John N. Mitchell. As Nixon's campaign manager, Mitchell dismissed Liddy from the C.R.P. after Liddy had refused to answer FBI questions about the Watergate bugging. Mitchell resigned from his post two days later, ostensibly at his wife Martha's insistence. But Democrats think that Mitchell was trying to extricate himself from Watergate before the situation blew up. By coming down hard on Mitchell, the Democrats hope they can make Watergate a devastating—and durable—campaign issue.