

Hunt Denies Blackmailing White House

MILWAUKEE, May 10 (AP)—Convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. denied today that he ever tried to blackmail President Nixon.

Hunt, in Milwaukee for a taping of the public television show "Firing Line" with long-time friend William F. Buckley Jr., said his requests for \$120,000 from the Nixon administration were not on the condition that he maintain silence about the Watergate break-in.

Hunt said former presidential counsel John W. Dean III's characterization of the request as a demand for hush money was "a total misperception on his part."

Hunt said the White House saw the request for money, made from the prison where Hunt was serving a sentence for the Watergate break-in, as blackmail because of Dean's "youth and inexperience."

Hunt insisted, however, that he requested the money only to cover his legal fees and to provide for his family for up to two years while he was in prison.

The former CIA agent said there is a world-wide unwritten agreement between undercover agents and their governments that the families of agents killed or captured in the line of duty will be compensated.

Hunt said that Dean's interpretation of the request for money as blackmail allowed the President to put Hunt in the role of an administration scapegoat.



Associated Press

Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr., right, denies on a television show with William F. Buckley Jr., left, that he attempted to blackmail the White House.