

# C.I.A. SAID TO FIND 'PLUMBERS' DATA

Transcript Is Believed Only  
Record of Ehrlichman's  
Asking Cushman Aid

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WASHINGTON, May 31 — The Central Intelligence Agency has reportedly discovered a partial stenographic record of a telephone conversation in 1971 that may represent a crucial piece of evidence in the Government's upcoming prosecution of the White House "plumbers."

The transcript, whose existence was made known by an extremely well-placed source, is believed to be the only record of a telephone call on July 7, 1971, in which John D. Ehrlichman reportedly requested C.I.A. assistance for one of the "plumbers" from Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., the agency's deputy director.

The significance of the document is that it could show the extent to which the C.I.A., which is barred by law from engaging in domestic intelligence operations, was told by the White House about the use the "plumbers" planned to make of materials the C.I.A. provided them.

Mr. Ehrlichman, then a top aide to President Nixon, has said that he had no recollection of having made such a request to General Cushman. Mr. Ehrlichman was charged with the over-all responsibility for the "plumbers" task force, which was aimed at halting leaks of information to the press.

The general, now commandant of the Marine Corps, told the Senate Watergate committee last summer he received a telephone call in early July, 1971, that he believed was from Mr. Ehrlichman, requesting some technical assistance for E. Howard Hunt Jr., a member of the "plumbers" who was later convicted for the bungled Watergate break-in.

But the reported existence of the shorthand notes, taken by a secretary who is said to have listened in on the conversation, assumes importance in view of General Cushman's testimony in August that his recollection of the caller's identity was based on circumstantial evidence alone.

As a result of the White House request, Mr. Hunt was eventually provided by the C.I.A.'s Technical Services Division with false identification papers and equipment, including a hidden camera that was used for "photographic reconnaissance" of the office of a

Beverly Hills, Calif., psychiatrist who had treated Dr. Daniel Ellsberg. Mr. Ehrlichman and four others, not including Mr. Hunt, were indicted by a grand jury in March through evidence presented by the special Watergate prosecutor on charges of conspiring to violate the civil rights of Dr. Lewis I. Fielding, the psychiatrist, in connection with a burglary at his office in September, 1971.

## Hunt's Account

Mr. Hunt, who was granted immunity in the case, has told a Federal grand jury here that he arranged for the burglary, which proved to be unfruitful, to seek information about Dr. Ellsberg, who was then suspected of having leaked the Pentagon papers to the press.

Mr. Ehrlichman has denied that he authorized the Fielding break-in or had any foreknowledge that such a move was being planned by the "plumbers," learning of it only after Mr. Hunt returned empty-handed to Washington.

Last July, Mr. Ehrlichman told the Watergate committee that he could not remember "ever making such a call" to General Cushman. Informed by telephone of the report that a partial record of the call had been found in C.I.A. files, the President's former chief domestic adviser insisted that he still could not recollect the incident.

According to the original source, the brief stenographic record, which amounted to three typewritten lines, was made by a C.I.A. secretary who listened to the Ehrlichman Cushman conversation on what is called a "dead key"—a button on a telephone instrument that allows a second party to listen to a conversation in progress without being overheard.

The use of a secretary to take notes of a telephone conversation is not uncommon in Washington. One C.I.A. official described it as standard procedure at the agency.

A second well-placed source said that the second had been "sent to the hill," and another said that he believed a copy had also been forwarded to the office of Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor.

Fred D. Thompson, the chief minority counsel to the Watergate committee, has been investigating, in behalf of Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., of Tennessee, the Republican vice-chairman, the C.I.A.'s involvement in the Watergate affair. But Mr. Thompson declined to say whether the document was among the materials he had received from the agency thus far.

The initial source would not characterize the details of Mr. Ehrlichman's request for technical assistance for Mr. Hunt, who retired from a long career in the C.I.A.'s clandestine service before joining the "plumbers" group shortly after it was set up to investigate Mr. Ellsberg's role in the Pentagon papers case.