

# HUNT TELLS COURT HE HID FULL TRUTH

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Admits Lying to Grand Jury  
and Withholding the Facts  
From Watergate Panel  
**NYTimes**

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 28—E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the seven men who were allegedly paid off to keep silent about the Watergate break-in, testified today that he had continued to withhold the "entire truth" until his appearance in court this morning.

Mr. Hunt said at the Watergate cover-up trial that he lied to the Watergate grand jury in the spring of 1973.

He also said he had withheld the full truth from the Senate Watergate committee when he testified at the committee's hearings in September, 1973, and that he had even withheld the truth in his memoirs, whose publication date is two weeks away.

Mr. Hunt made the admissions in a soft voice during his final few minutes on the witness stand.

The five defendants in the cover-up trial are former Attorney General John N. Mitchell; John D. Ehrlichman, former adviser on domestic matters to President Nixon; H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff; Robert C. Mardian, former Assistant Attorney General, and Kenneth W. Parkinson, former lawyer for the Nixon re-election committee. All five are charged with a basic conspiracy count alleging that they plotted to obstruct justice

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Associated Press

E. Howard Hunt Jr., who was convicted in the Watergate burglary, on way to testify on cover-up.

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in the original investigation of the Watergate break-in.

One of the means through which the obstruction was to be accomplished, according to the indictment, was the payment of money to the seven men charged in the Watergate break-in to keep them silent.

William G. Hundley, one of the defense lawyers, objected immediately afterward to Judge John J. Sirica that the special Watergate prosecution had behaved improperly earlier in the day when, he said, it indicated to the judge that Mr. Hunt might be a "hostile" witness.

The prosecution had asked this morning, and Judge Sirica had agreed, that Mr. Hunt be designated a "court witness" so that the prosecution could have more than the usual leeway in questioning him. Mr. Hundley told Judge Sirica that he hoped the judge would reconsider his stance on court witnesses after hearing Mr. Hunt's testimony.

Judge Sirica, who had started off the day's proceedings with a firm defense of the way he is handling the trial, rebuffed Mr. Hundley.

#### Designation Defended

Had Mr. Hunt not been a court witness, the judge said, the full testimony about lying to the grand jury and other forums would not have come out until cross-examination, when the defense would have been able to elicit it by confronting Mr. Hunt with his contradictory statements.

"You would have butchered him," the judge said.

Mr. Hunt, a long-time employe of the Central Intelligence Agency who went to work at the White House in 1971 at the behest of a friend, Charles W. Colson, then a special counsel to the President and one of the alleged co-conspirators in the case, had begun to recant at the Senate Watergate hearings.

His testimony was in many ways an expanded version of his testimony at the hearings, with some new details but with many of the same statements, such as his admission of his role in helping to manage the Watergate break-in.

#### Earlier Statements

But, during the hearings and in subsequent interviews, Mr. Hunt sought to portray his demands for money after the break-in as legitimate requests for legal fees and support, rather than as threats to tell all unless he was paid.

While Richard Ben-Veniste, the prosecutor questioning Mr. Hunt, did not press him on these earlier statements, Mr. Hunt appeared to be backing away from them.

Mr. Hunt testified that, shortly after writing Mr. Colson in August of 1972 to press his demands for money, he had left a message with Mr. Colson's secretary to the effect that "whether or not I had to go to jail, my lips would be sealed."

He also conceded that a phrase in his letter to Mr. Colson, in which he said he was willing to do his part in the effort to re-elect President Nixon, meant "that I would not reveal my knowledge of the Watergate affair."

Mr. Hunt also provided another new bit of testimony. He said that a \$75,000 payment was delivered to his attorney, for him, on the night of March 21, 1973. At the Senate Water-

gate hearings, Mr. Hunt had been vague as to whether the money was delivered on March 20 or March 21.

#### Conversation Recorded

The point is important because of a tape recording of a conversation in the White House on March 21 between Mr. Nixon, H. R. Haldeman and John W. Dean 3d in which Mr. Hunt's demands for payments were discussed and in which Mr. Nixon appeared to be ordering, or at least approving, the payment.

Yet, of all Mr. Hunt's testimony, the most dramatic was his admissions about withholding the full story of Watergate since the break-in 28 months ago.

Mr. Hunt pleaded guilty to charges stemming from the break-in on Jan. 11, 1973, just after the case went to trial. He was sentenced last November to 30 months to eight years and was fined \$10,000. He has been out of jail pending an appeal in which he sought to withdraw his guilty plea.

But, as Mr. Ben-Veniste brought out this afternoon, Mr. Hunt was given a "provisional" sentence by Judge Sirica in March, 1973. Shortly thereafter, he was given immunity and asked to testify before the grand jury.

#### Dozen Statements Cited

Mr. Ben-Veniste cited to Mr. Hunt more than a dozen statements that Mr. Hunt had made before the grand jury. Each time he asked Mr. Hunt if the testimony was true, false or evasive, Mr. Hunt replied in almost every case that his testimony had been false, and in a few cases that it had been evasive.

Then Mr. Ben-Veniste turned to Mr. Hunt's later statements. Pressed by the 31-year-old prosecutor, Mr. Hunt conceded that he had begun to recant when he learned that other White House and Nixon campaign aides had begun to cooperate with the authorities, and that he had told some of the accurate story to the Senate. But not the entire truth, he added.

Did there come a time when he decided to tell the entire truth, Mr. Ben-Veniste asked.

"Yes, sir," Mr. Hunt replied. "The past month."

The prosecutor asked Mr. Hunt what happened to make him change his mind.

Mr. Hunt quietly gave the FOLLOWING ACCOUNT:

He realized when he was in prison that, because of the "furor" of Watergate, the White House would be unable to help him. When he was released from prison last January, he began to "restructure" his life.

#### A 'Rude Awakening'

"Then in the spring of this year, I began to read transcripts of White House tapes. I felt a sense of rude awakening, and I realized that these men were not worth my continued loyalty."

Still, he kept his silence, thinking that it was in his "own self interest."

But last summer, he was subpoenaed to appear as a witness at the cover-up trial.

"I was faced with the hard decision of whether I should continue to lie to protect others, or to tell the full truth once and for all." His attorneys urged him to make a full disclosure.

"I sensed even my own child-

ren were not truly persuaded that my testimony was in all respects factual and candid."

"As a result of all these facts I resolved to make the hard decision to testify to the entire truth."

"Have you done so in this courtroom today to the best of your ability, Mr. Hunt?" Ms. Mr. Ben-Veniste asked.

"I have," Mr. Hunt replied.

It is unclear whether Mr. Hunt can or will be prosecuted for any of the falsehoods he admitted to today. The Office of the Special Watergate Prosecution declined to comment on the matter. Mr. Hunt is not testifying under a grant of immunity at this trial; on the other hand, he has been named an unindicted co-conspirator in the cover-up case and it is not clear whether this fact bars his further prosecution.

#### Expanded Version

Mr. Hunt gave the jury an expanded version of the account he gave the Senate Watergate committee last year, when he described events leading up to the break-in. Essentially, the account focused the responsibility on Mr. Mitchell.

It was based largely on statements that Mr. Hunt said had been made to him by G. Gordon Liddy, another of the seven men who were convicted or who pleaded guilty in the Watergate break-in case.

This led to one of the day's legal tangles. William G. Hundley, one of Mr. Mitchell's attorneys, argued that Mr. Hunt should not be allowed to repeat statements that Mr. Liddy made before the date the cover-up is alleged to have begun. Mr. Hundley said the legal rule that allows repetition in court of second-hand statements made by alleged co-conspirators applies only to those statements made during the conspiracy.

Mr. Ben-Veniste and Mr. Neal argued that they were offering the Liddy statements not to prove the truth of what Mr. Liddy said but to show the knowledge that Mr. Hunt had.

A key element of the charges against the five defendants is that they plotted to obstruct justice by offering the Watergate burglars money and other inducements to keep them silent. To prove their case, the prosecutors said, they would have to show what it was that Mr. Hunt knew and was being paid to keep secret.

The prosecutors won the argument.

As Mr. Hunt told it, in a

voice so soft that Mr. Ben-Veniste asked him several times to pull the microphone closer. Mr. Liddy informed him that in November of 1971, Mr. Liddy was offered a job as "head of a large-scale intelligence-gathering, political intelligence-gathering operation" for Mr. Mitchell, who was then the Attorney General.

Mr. Liddy then asked him to help out on the project, Mr. Hunt said. A budget was prepared, the first one calling for a million-dollar scheme involving such things as illegal bugging and kidnapping. It was submitted to Mr. Mitchell.

#### 2 Plans Rejected

Mr. Hunt said he was not at this or the subsequent meetings between Mr. Liddy and campaign officials concerning the proposed budget. But Mr. Hunt told the jury what he said Mr. Liddy had told him of the meetings—that Mr. Mitchell turned down the million-dollar plan in January, and, on Feb. 14, turned down a reduced half-million-dollar plan.

Then, in early April, Mr. Hunt said, Mr. Liddy came to him and said that a third, still cheaper plan had been approved.

"The big man's giving his O.K. to it," or said, "O.K., the word is go," Mr. Hunt said, quoting Mr. Liddy.

Had Mr. Liddy used the phrase "big man" before, Mr. Ben-Veniste asked. Yes, Mr. Hunt replied. Had Mr. Liddy used the phrase after that occasion? Yes, Mr. Hunt replied again.

"To whom did he refer?" the prosecutor asked.

At that point, Mr. Hundley objected. Judge Sirica asked Mr. Hunt how he knew to whom Mr. Liddy was referring.

"There was only one big man involved" in the planning, Mr. Hunt replied. "The biggest man," he said, in terms of stature and rank, was Mr. Mitchell.

Did Mr. Liddy use the phrase "big man" to describe Mr. Mitchell on other occasions, Mr. Ben-Veniste asked next.

"Yes, sir," was the answer, along with the phrase, "the big boy."

Mr. Hunt, again, quoting Mr. Liddy, said it developed that Mr. Mitchell was to use the same hotel suite in Miami Beach during the 1972 Republican National Convention that Lawrence F. O'Brien, then the Democratic national chairman, was to use during the Democratic convention a few weeks earlier.

"The only thing I care about," Mr. Mitchell remarked, according to Mr. Hunt's testimony of what he had been told by Mr. Liddy, "is to be sure to get those bugs out before I go in."

#### Break-ins Described

Mr. Hunt described the two break-ins carried out by Republican employees at the Democratic national headquarters in the Watergate office and apartment complex—the first in May, 1972, when photographs were taken and a bug was installed, and the second on June 17, 1972, when the burglars were caught.

He said Mr. Liddy had told him that his "superiors"—meaning Mr. Mitchell, Jeb Stuart Magruder, to deputy campaign director, and John W. Dean 3d, then counsel to the President and now the prosecution's chief witness—had been "titillated" by the results of the first break-in but wanted a second entry carried out to fix a bug on a telephone.

Mr. Hunt said that when he protested, on the ground that the gains would not be worth the risks, Mr. Liddy said, "Look the Attorney General didn't hire me to give him problems."