

WATERGATE JURY SHOPS FOR GIFTS

Panel Will Have Families as
Dinner Guests Today

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24 (AP)—The jurors at the Watergate cover-up trial were permitted to purchase gifts today before spending Christmas with their families.

A special dinner, with fountains spurting champagne and cold duck, was planned for the holiday tomorrow in a banquet room of the Sheraton-Park Hotel.

More than 40 members of the jurors' families have been invited to the holiday, which will be closely watched by 17 United States marshals to prevent conversations about the trial. The marshals also accompanied jurors on shopping errands.

Four of the five defendants—John N. Mitchell, former Attorney General and head of President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign; H. R. Haldeman, once Mr. Nixon's chief of staff; Robert C. Mardian, a former Assistant Attorney General and campaign committee aide, and Kenneth W. Parkinson, a lawyer for the committee—indicated plans to spend Christmas with their families in Washington. John D. Ehrlichman, formerly Mr. Nixon's domestic adviser, is with his family in Seattle.

The jury and alternates—14 women and three men—recently moved from the Midtown Motel, about 10 blocks from the courthouse, to the Sheraton-Park, a more expensive residence in a residential section of northwest Washington.

An official with the United States marshal's office said that the move had been intended to make the jurors as comfortable as possible as they begin final deliberations.

Judge Gives Day Off

The menu for the Christmas Day dinner includes shrimp cocktail, roast turkey, celery dressing, cranberry sauce, and a choice of mince pie, pumpkin pie, ice cream pie or cheesecake for dessert.

Although the jurors are now living in the same hotel where they were to entertain their families, the visits will be confined to the hotel dinner.

United States District Judge John J. Sirica suggested three weeks ago that the jury work on Saturdays to make a pre-Christmas verdict possible. But in a letter, the jurors replied unanimously that they felt the careful and deliberate presentation of the case to be more important than spending the holiday at home.

Judge Sirica also suggested that he hold court today, but the jurors responded that they would rather have the day off, and the judge obliged.

"I don't think we ought to force these jurors to sit," Judge Sirica said yesterday. "Maybe some of them have some last minute shopping."

The jury will hear final defense closing arguments Thursday and Friday. They are expected to begin deliberations of the guilt or innocence of the defendants by the end of the week. The defendants are charged with conspiring to obstruct the investigation into the June 17, 1972, break-in at the Democratic national offices in the Watergate complex here.

"I suspect the members of the jury will always remember this Christmas," Judge Sirica told the panel before dismissing them for the holiday break. "It's probably the first and last time you'll ever be sequestered over Christmas."