

Bugging 'Participant' Gives Details

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The Democratic Party has obtained a detailed account of wiretapping of Democratic headquarters at the Watergate from a man who claims to have participated in the operation. The Washington Post learned yesterday.

In the presence of his lawyer, the self-described participant has told Democratic investigators that the telephone conversations of Democratic Party leaders were

monitored, transcribed and then sent in memorandum form to high-ranking officials of President Nixon's re-election committee and to a presidential assistant.

Although The Post could not learn the name of the person who provided the Democrats with the purported account of the operation, it is known that he told party investigators he served as a security guard for Martha Mitchell before being recruited for the Watergate operation.

During his interview with Democratic Party investigators, the self-described participant said he had already provided the FBI with a detailed account of the Watergate bugging plot and that he had testified in late July before the federal grand jury investigating the case.

Spokesmen for the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office here both declined yesterday to comment on whether they had received such an account of the bugging operation from a participant.

Other government sources could neither confirm nor deny the existence of such a witness in the federal investigation and a spokesman for the Committee for the Re-election of the President declined to make any comment on the matter.

In the account he gave to Democratic Party investigators, the self-described participant said memoranda of tapped telephone conversations were typed by James W.

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McCord, then security chief of the Nixon re-election committee and one of the five men arrested inside Democratic headquarters at the Watergate on June 17.

The memos, each purportedly beginning with the notation "confidential informant reports," were then directed to several top-echelon officials of the Nixon committee and—in at least one instance—to one of President Nixon's assistants, according to the Democrats' informant.

Sources close to the investigation of the Watergate case say the FBI has been unable to find copies of any such memos allegedly sent to a White House aide or Nixon committee officials. Nor have agents found anyone who acknowledges receiving such memos, although the self-described participant said he supplied the FBI with the names of persons to whom memos were directed.

Included in the memoranda, according to the Democrats' informant, were details of telephone conversations by Democratic Party leaders in which politics and their personal lives were discussed.

The conversations, the informant told Democratic investigators, were intercepted from telephone inside Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate, 2600 Virginia Ave. NW, and monitored across the street in Room 723 of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge.

The self-described participant in the bugging operation

said he was assigned by McCord to be the principal monitor of the telephone taps from late May until the abortive mission into Democratic headquarters on June 17.

At 2:30 that morning, McCord and four men from Miami were arrested inside the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee. Police seized electronic surveillance gear and photographic equipment allegedly carried inside by the five men.

In addition, the FBI has been told that former White House aides E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy were also inside the Watergate the same morning but escaped across the street to Howard Johnson's when the police arrived.

According to the Democrats' informant, neither Liddy nor Hunt is the White House aide to whom McCord allegedly directed at least one of the memos.

The names of the Republican officials who were allegedly addressed in the memos could not be learned yesterday.

The self-described participant, who no longer works at the Nixon committee, said he was instructed by McCord to transcribe by typewriter everything that was said over two phone taps, but that one of the taps—the one on the phone of former Democratic National

Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien—failed to work properly.

The Democrats' informant was the source of Wednesday's charge by O'Brien that part of the purpose of the June 17 break-in at the Democrats' Watergate headquarters was to repair such a faulty tap.

Each day, according to the informant's account he would be called at his monitoring post in the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge by McCord and asked if there were any "hot items" that had come across the tap.

If revealing information of a personal or political nature was obtained, the informant said, McCord would then come to the motel, read the transcript and type a memorandum dealing with the "hot item."

The memo would always begin, "confidential informant says," apparently to conceal that the information had come from a telephone tap, according to the Democrats' source.

In this way, it would be possible that those who read any memos would have no idea the information was obtained illegally or through wiretapping.

The self-described participant said he saw only some of the names of persons McCord allegedly directed memos to, and that—except for one occasion—McCord always took it upon himself to deliver the memos. On the other occasion, the informant said, he took the memorandum—inside a sealed envelope with the prospective recipient's name—and left it with a guard at the office of the Committee

for the Re-Election of the President.

On days when McCord did not come to the Howard Johnson's to prepare memos on "hot items," the Nixon committee security chief would show up at the end of the day to collect all the typed transcripts of wiretapped conversations, according to the informant's account. McCord would then allegedly place the transcripts in his briefcase and leave, he said.

The Democrats' informant was also the source for O'Brien's charge Wednesday that Sen. George McGovern's former campaign headquarters were targeted for a separate eavesdropping attempt May 27.

McGovern, campaigning in New Mexico Saturday, repeated the charge and added details. He said the eavesdropping attempt was aborted because "there was someone sleeping in the doorway of the headquarters and other workers inside."

Both O'Brien and McGovern declined to identify the source of their information.