

Demo HQ Bugging Participant Talks

L.A. Times Service

New Haven, Conn.

A participant in the bugging incident at Democratic national headquarters told the Los Angeles Times he delivered sealed sets of eavesdropping logs to the Committee for the Re-election of the President less than two weeks before police closed in on the illegal operation.

Alfred C. Baldwin III, a key government witness in the case, said the logs were addressed to an official of the committee who is not indicted for the crime. Baldwin said he could not recall the identity of the official.

Baldwin said he was instructed to deliver the logs in early June by James W. McCord Jr., then security coordinator for the Nixon committee and one of the seven defendants indicted last month in the June 17 incident at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.

McCord gave him the instructions from Miami, Baldwin said, after Baldwin had advised him that he had recorded "some important conversations" while monitoring the wire tap at Democratic national headquarters.

Baldwin, 36, a former FBI agent and security guard for

See Back Page

From Page 1

Martha Mitchell, spoke out about his role in the bizarre case in more than five hours of tape-recorded interviews with the Times. Baldwin monitored the telephone tap at the Democratic headquarters last May and June from a listening post in

the Howard Johnson Motel, across the street from the Watergate.

Baldwin's attorneys, John V. Cassidanto and Robert C. Mirto, urged the Times yesterday not to print their client's interview or any stories based on it. They did so after being contacted* by Earl Silbert, chief assistant to the U.S. Attorney in Washington, who is in charge of the government's case.

WARNING

Silbert warned Cassidanto that the government might consider its agreement not to prosecute Baldwin broken if he spoke out on the case and also raised the possibility of Baldwin's being held in contempt of court, according to Cassidanto. Seymour Glanzer, the other main government attorney in the case, later*called Baldwin's lawyers and read them an order issued yesterday by U.S. District Judge John Sirica barring principals from making statements on the case.

Although there have been widespread reports that Baldwin was attempting to sell his story, he received no remuneration from the Times. His sole request was that he be permitted to tell the story the way he saw it.

In the interviews, Baldwin said he placed the eavesdropping logs in an envelope, addressing it to the official, taped and stapled the envelope and took it to the Nixon committee offices, seven blocks away.

INTEREST

Baldwin said he believed the eavesdroppers were interested primarily in infor-

mation about Senator George S. McGovern, Lawrence F. O'Brien, then Democratic party chairman, and about Democratic political strategy.

Justice Department officials involved in the investigation have said that the real motivation for the bizarre crime may never emerge.

But for Baldwin, the purpose was clear "at the outset." That was May 25 when McCord reassigned Baldwin from reporting on anti-administration demonstrations to monitoring the phone tap. Baldwin said he kept logs on about 200 telephone conversations he had monitored over a three-week period.

McCord, Baldwin said, would leave his desk at the Nixon committee to visit the listening post once or twice a day. He said McCord, a former CIA agent, would often sit down and rewrite the logs in memorandum form when they disclosed elements of McGovern's strategy or of O'Brien's activities.

BALKS

On the advice of his lawyers, Baldwin declined to give specifics on the conversations monitored. The attorneys advised him that he would be violating the federal wiretapping statute if he disclosed the contents of those conversations.

In the interviews, Baldwin dismissed published reports that the eavesdropping sought signs of a link between Fidel Castro's Cuba and the McGovern - Democratic campaign efforts.

Although four of the five men arrested on June 17 were Cuban born and all had been deeply involved in anti-Castro activities, Baldwin said he never heard the three defendants with whom he had contact mention Cuba. In addition to McCord, those defendants are G. Gordon Liddy, former FBI agent, White House aide and finance counsel at the Committee for the Re-election of the President, and E. Howard Hunt Jr., ex CIA agent and former White House consultant.

The Baldwin interviews shed new light on the politically charged case, which is unlikely to proceed in civil or criminal courts until well after the election.

DISCLOSURES

Chief among the new disclosures are these:

• Baldwin said that he saw electronic equipment, some of which was later used in the Watergate eavesdropping, stored in McCord's office at Nixon committee offices.

• Baldwin said he watched from across the street on May 25 as McCord entered Democratic headquarters and installed two wiretaps. McCord was accompanied by at least one other person, perhaps two, but Baldwin was not close enough to identify anyone other than McCord. (The indictment alleged that the eavesdropping began on or about May 25.)

• The tap installed on the telephone of Spencer Oliver, coordinator of state Democratic chairmen, worked well. But the device planted on what the eavesdroppers believed to be O'Brien's telephone failed to transmit because it was too shielded by the building and office equipment.

• As a result, Baldwin said he was ordered by McCord to enter Democratic headquarters and pinpoint O'Brien's phone as well as to learn where O'Brien was staying in Miami during preparations for the Democratic national convention.

POSE

Baldwin accomplished this, he said, by using his McCord-assigned alias of Bill Johnson and posing as the nephew of John Bailey, former Democratic national chairman who, like Baldwin, is from Connecticut. Democratic office workers gave him royal treatment, Baldwin said — and O'Brien's Miami telephone number.

The eavesdropping squad entered Democratic headquarters early on June 17 to place a tap on the phone,

which they then knew to be O'Brien's and to install bugging equipment in the offices.

Minutes after five of them were caught, Hunt rushed into Baldwin's room across the street in the Howard Johnson Motel to call a lawyer. Baldwin said Hunt's telephone conversation was brief and to the point. "Well, they've had it," he quoted him as telling the party on the other end of the line. Hunt told the other person, whose identity is unknown to Baldwin, that he had \$5000 for bail money.

HIRING

When Baldwin was hired by the Nixon committee to serve as Mrs. Mitchell's security guard, Frederick LaRue, special assistant to the campaign director, had to approve his employment. LaRue, whom McCord described as then campaign director John N. Mitchell's "right-hand man," subsequently told Baldwin that the pistol given to him for the security assignment once belonged to LaRue.

LaRue, reached at his home last night, confirmed that he had approved hiring Baldwin. But LaRue said the job was as a security guard for the Mitchells and not as a committee employee. LaRue denied that he told Baldwin he once owned the weapon issued to Baldwin. Asked if he had owned such a gun, LaRue said: "I've got several guns. I may have one of those."

Baldwin said he never questioned the legality of his wiretapping assignment or other of McCord's orders because he assumed they were properly "authorized."

He said he had reached that conclusion partly because of the large number of former White House aides he said were working for the President's re-election committee.

CALL

Baldwin called LaRue about a week after the June 17 arrests and said LaRue relieved him of the security assignment. But when Baldwin indicated to LaRue that he had been involved in the eavesdropping, he said, LaRue's tone changed immediately.

Twenty minutes after his conversation with LaRue, Baldwin's lawyers said they were called by Paul O'Brien, another attorney for the Nixon committee. O'Brien, the lawyers said, made it clear the committee would try to disavow Baldwin's connection with the organization.

Before the June 17 arrests, Baldwin said, McCord told him he would be sent to Miami during the Democratic national convention to conduct a similar monitoring operation there. (The Committee for the Re-election of the President occupied a large number of rooms before and during the Democratic convention at the spa annex of the Fountainbleu hotel, which served as convention headquarters. Tight security surrounded the committee offices, with armed guards posted at all hotel room doors.)

PIN

Baldwin said that while McCord never gave him a committee identification card, he did issue him a lapel pin that identified committee personnel.

He said that during the investigation of the case, he turned the lapel pin over to an FBI agent. He said the agent later told him that he had used the lapel pin to enter the committee headquarters in Washington.

Baldwin said that other documentary evidence that he was employed by the committee included a check for \$429.84 for his work in May, providing security for Mrs. Mitchell.

The Times has a copy of the check, drawn on the account of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President.