

FBI Says GOP Unit Hurt Case

Nixon Officials Slowed Probe Of Watergate

3/6/73
By Carl Bernstein
and Bob Woodward
Washington Post Staff Writers

Officials for the Re-election of the President attempted to hamper the FBI's investigation of the Watergate bugging conspiracy, according to an FBI summary of the first month of its inquiry.

That source, according to the summary, was one of several persons at the committee who contacted the FBI after being initially interviewed and asked to be "further interviewed away from committee headquarters and without the knowledge of committee officials."

The FBI's 12-page summary, dated July 21, 1972, was among documents submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday by Acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray, whose nomination to become the bureau's director is being considered by the Committee.

The summary, which represents the first official confirmation of news reports that officials of President Nixon's re-election committee attempted to impede the Watergate investigation, was sent by Gray to President Nixon's counsel, John W. Dean III, within days of its preparation.

Federal sources have told The Washington Post that throughout their investigation, FBI agents continued to experience difficulty in obtaining information from both the White House and the Nixon re-election committee, even after Dean had become aware of the problem through the summary report.

guidepost.

The 10-member committee, on which Woodcock and AFL-CIO president George Meany both serve, agreed two Fridays ago that the 5.5 per cent ceiling on pay raises should be replaced with a broad "statement of purpose and policy," Woodcock said.

He added that it had been understood that Dunlop would make that statement public on Monday of last week. Dunlop did, but that was also when he and Schultz said that the 5.5 per cent standard would remain on the books.

The committee said pay raises this year should average about the same as last — a little over 6 per cent — but that "no single standard" could be applied to all wage settlements.

GRAY, From A1

The summary report does not give any other details about how the FBI's investigation was impeded by the committee during the first month.

Sources at the Nixon committee have told The Washington Post that committee attorneys advised employees to "stay away from certain" subjects (such as a large cash fund kept in the committee office) in their interviews with FBI agents.

In addition, committee sources have told The Post that top officials in the President's campaign ordered the destruction of some committee records following the arrest of five men inside the Democratic Party's Watergate headquarters on June 17.

In his testimony before the Judiciary Committee last week, Gray acknowledged that the bureau had received allegations about such destruction of records.

Gray told the Judiciary Committee that agents had attempted to interview the Nixon campaign's political coordinator, former Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian, about the alleged destruction of records. Mardian, who Nixon campaign sources said

directed the re-election committee's response to the bugging, refused to answer the FBI's questions on grounds of the attorney-client privilege, Gray testified last week.

The July 21 summary report supplied to the Judiciary Committee by Gray also makes the following points:

• That White House counsel Dean "sat in on all interviews conducted with White House personnel."

(After July 21, Dean received the FBI's summary reports of its investigation, as well as raw data from interviews conducted across the country by federal agents, according to Gray's testimony.)

• That FBI agents received information from a "cooperative source" in the committee who reported that the wife of one of the Watergate bugging conspirators, James W. McCord Jr., had told a Nixon committee official: "Well, it looks like your project failed."

The summary report identified the official as Robert C. Odle, the committee's director of personnel and administration, and added: "This source identified Odle as one of the individuals who was less than candid in his interview with FBI agents." Odle, according

to testimony in the Watergate trial, approved McCord's hiring as security coordinator of the Nixon re-election committee.

The FBI summary report also says that a Nixon committee official "confidentially advised that Hugh Walter Sloan Jr., who supervises committee finances, reportedly maintains a briefcase full of money in his office safe."

"During the period February to April, 1972," the FBI report continues, "Sloan allegedly disbursed large sums to various committee officials for unknown reasons."

Those disbursements, according to the memo, include \$50,000 to Jeb Stuart Magruder, the No. 2 official at the Nixon campaign committee, \$100,000 to Herbert L. Porter, the Nixon committee scheduling director, and \$89,000 to G. Gordon Liddy, then the Nixon finance counsel and one of the men convicted Jan. 30 at the Watergate bugging trial.

Last September when The Post printed a story saying that Magruder had received \$50,000 from the cash fund, Magruder denied that he received any cash funds from the committee.

When the FBI summary report was prepared, the Water-

gate investigation had been under way for more than a month. Though interviews had been conducted with key Nixon committee officials by that time, the federal investigators apparently had not been told about the \$199,000 payment that Magruder authorized be paid to Liddy to set up an intelligence - gathering operation.

This \$199,000 was a central part of the financing of the Watergate bugging, according to evidence presented in the trial.

Magruder authorized that \$199,000 payment to Liddy, according to the trial testimony, but Sloan, the committee treasurer, also verified that disbursement with former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, the chief Nixon fundraiser, and indirectly with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, the Nixon campaign manager.