

Happy Democrats Leave Watergate; 'Lock Door to Past'

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 20 —
The Democrats happily left the scene of the crime today.

"We've locked the door to the past," Mrs. Mary Lou Burg, the deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said as she officially turned the key and her back on its sixth-floor headquarters in the Watergate, now one of the country's most familiar addresses.

Her ritual closed a fascinating paragraph in one of the most bizarre chapters in American politics.

Now, the movers will begin transferring the desks, chairs, files, flowers and pictures to a smaller but more expensive suite across town, leaving behind an empty, gold-carpeted honeycomb where, 10 months ago, history of a kind was made.

There, last June 17, Washington policemen caught five men who were accused of burglarizing the offices and electronically bugging the telephones used by the people running the Democrats' 1972 Presidential campaign.

"It was stupid and silly," Mrs. Burg said today of the break-in, which resulted in

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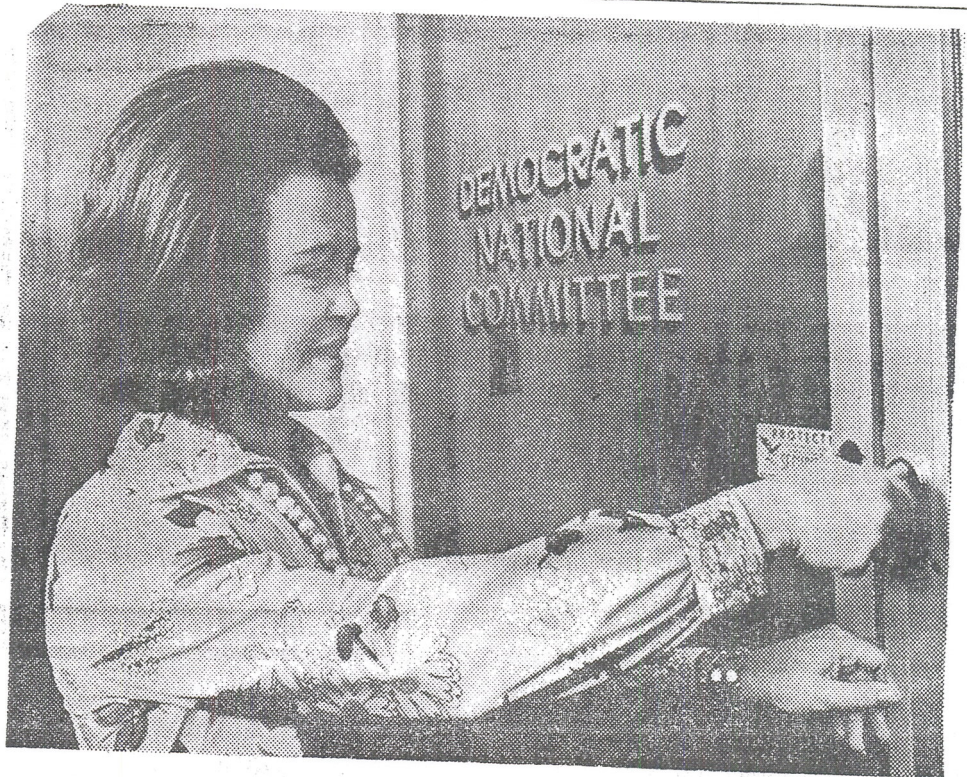
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five pleas of guilty and two convictions. "There were no secrets here — there never were. Whatever they were looking for they could have read in the newspapers in a couple of days."

There was little passion in her voice as she discussed the break-in. She and others had said it all before, and today she seemed eager to complete the ceremonies and be on her way.

The Democrats' new offices will be in the Airline Pilots Association Building, about two miles away on Massachusetts Avenue.

"It's smaller, but it's bet-



Mrs. Mary Lou Burg, deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, turning the key to lock the door to the committee's former headquarters in the Watergate. The New York Times/George Tames

ter organized," said Joseph Carter, a committee staff member, "and it will get us away from the Watergate syndrome."

"What is the Watergate syndrome?" a reporter asked. "Well, I mean, it's the idea that the place here is where a lot of rich Republicans live," he responded a little weakly.

It was pointed out that some rich Democrats also lived in the exclusive, expensive complex of offices, shops and condominiums.

"Well, you know what I mean," he said.

Whatever he meant, he seemed as elated as any of the dozen other staff members who had spent the morning making last-minute arrangements for the move to the new quarters.

Relics Are Noted

Nevertheless, there were relics from the not-too-distant past that gave some of them pause:

¶ A poster on a cabinet drawer that said "Nixon Is Through in '72."

¶ A bumper-sticker on a desk-panel that read, "Boy-cott Lettuce."

¶ A manila folder in a waste basket containing "News and Notes on Tom Eagleton."

¶ A montage of photographs showing enlargements of the "bugs" placed in one of the telephones.

The committee's new offices will be 2,000 square feet smaller than the area it has rented at the Watergate since 1967, and the cost will be substantially more.

At the new building, the annual lease will be \$120,000. For 17,000 square feet at the Watergate, the committee paid \$97,750.

"But our lease was up

here," Mr. Carter said, "and besides, they were going to raise our rent—and anyway, there's the Watergate syndrome, you know."

So, as the minutes ticked away toward noon and the official closing ceremonies, Marie Quick, the committee's switchboard operator for the last 27 years, began to close down her operations.

"Get off the line, kid," she told one staff member still talking on a phone in a rear office. "I'm closing this thing down at 12 o'clock sharp—so just get off the line."

One Worker Nostalgic

In the corner office where one of the "bugs" had been found, two staff-members, Martha Sampson and Lisa Haldane, were discussing the exodus.

"I'm really quite nostalgic about this whole thing," Miss Sampson said.

"Oh, God," Miss Haldane said.

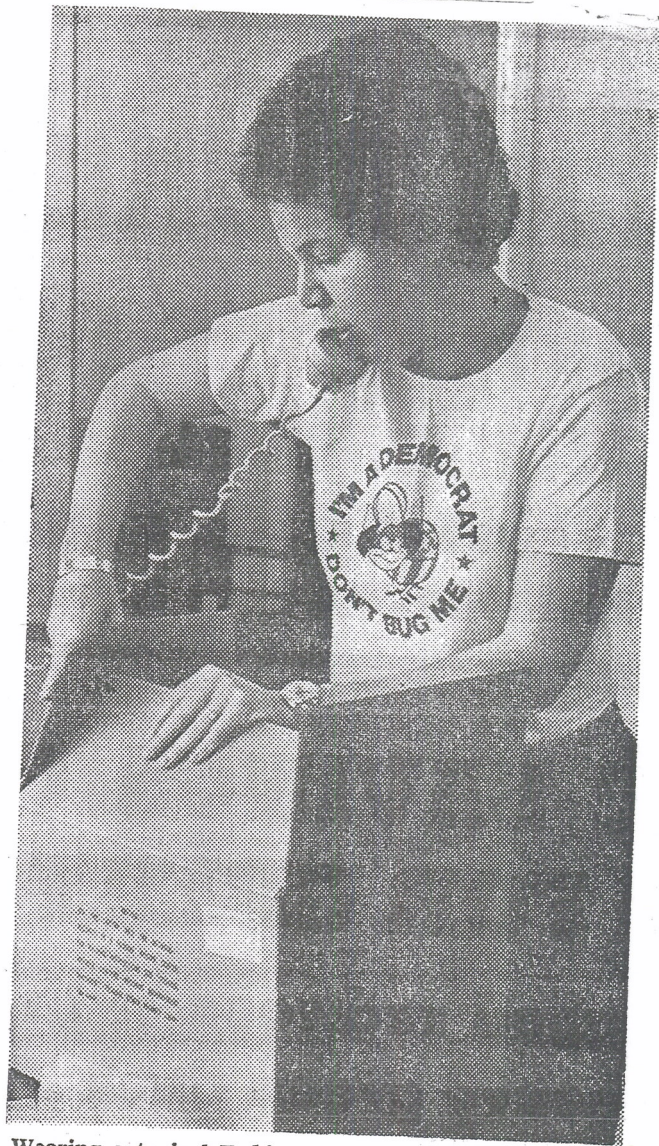
"Well, I am, really."

"Don't pay any attention to her," Miss Haldane cautioned reporters. "She probably is a little crazy by now."

"No, no, no," Miss Sampson insisted. "I'm sad about leaving here."

"Why in the world are you said?"

"Because, I feel like this is history—right here in this room where I worked—and we'll never be here again."



Wearing a topical T-shirt, a Democratic National Committee worker answers the phone during final packing.