

Hunt admits he lied during 12 appearances before grand jury

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. admitted Monday he lied at least 12 times in appearances before a grand jury. But he said that after reading transcripts of the White House tapes he decided to tell all he knew about the break-in.

Testifying at the Watergate cover-up trial, Hunt said, "In the spring of this year I began to read transcripts of the White House tapes. I felt a sense of rude awakening. "I realized these men were not worthy of my continued loyalty."

The former CIA agent who was convicted of burglary, conspiracy and wiretapping in the Watergate break-in trial, said that when he was subpoenaed this past summer to testify again, he was "faced with the hard decision of whether to continue to lie to protect others or to tell all."

He said his attorneys advised him to tell everything he knew. Under questioning by Assistant Special Prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste, Hunt admitted that he had lied at least 12 times since granted immunity from prosecution on the basis of his testimony before a federal grand jury.

He said he lied about his contacts with former White House special counsel Charles Colson and fellow break-in defendant James McCord as well as about his knowledge of the involvement of others in the Watergate break-in. Defense attorneys will begin their cross-examination of Hunt on Tuesday.

When he leaves the stand, the prosecution plans to call Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of the Nixon re-election committee, as its next witness. Magruder already has pleaded guilty to conspiring to obstruct justice and has been cooperating with the prosecutors.

Earlier, Hunt described how his wife was used as a conduit for payments to the break-in defendants. But the payments proved disappointingly small, Hunt testified. "The arrears were steadily mounting," he said. Prosecutors at the trial of five former

Nixon administration and campaign aides entered into evidence an accounting Hunt's wife, Dorothy, gave to his attorney, William O. Bitman, of the distribution of \$53,500. The accounting, dated Sept. 19, 1972.

HUNT

(Continued From Page A-1)

showed that nearly all the money went for attorneys' fees and bail.

Hunt told how two days after the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in he went to his office in the Executive Office Building next to the White House and "gave a cursory glance around to satisfy myself that nothing had been disturbed."

Then he passed a message to Charles W. Colson, special White House counsel, telling him, "I want Chuck to know my safe upstairs is loaded."

He described the contents as including bugging equipment, faked State Department cables, a psychiatric profile of Daniel Ellsberg and notebooks listing people involved in political intelligence activities being conducted by the Nixon re-election committee.

Earlier, Hunt had testified that he was told that the "big man" had approved a political intelligence plan calling for illegal break-ins and wiretapping. Asked who the "big man" was, Hunt replied:

"There was only one big man involved in the entire planning episode. The big man involved stature-wise was the attorney general, Mr. John Mitchell."

Hunt, convicted of burglary and conspiracy in the Watergate break-in trial, said it was another of the break-in conspirators, G. Gordon Liddy, who told him Mitchell had approved the intelligence operation.

Asked how he knew Liddy meant Mitchell, Hunt said Liddy always referred to the then attorney general "as the big man and also as the big boy."

His answer drew a laugh from Mitchell, one of five defendants charged with conspiring to block investigation of the Watergate break-in.

The other defendants are former White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, former assistant attorney general Robert C. Mardian, and Kenneth W. Parkinson, onetime attorney for the Nixon reelection committee.

See HUNT, page A-6