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Hunt Refuses to Talk About Break-In—Democrats Sue for Million in Damages

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By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 20—E. Howard Hunt Jr., former part-time White House consultant, has refused to answer questions by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in connection with last Saturday's break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices here.

Informed sources said that Mr. Hunt had been approached a number of times by F.B.I. agents, but declined to answer their questions.

The F.B.I. subpoenaed some of the records of Washington's Watergate Hotel, where four of the five suspects stayed before their arrest inside the Democratic offices early Saturday. Federal agents in Miami interrogated several business and personal associates of the group's suspected leader.

Meanwhile the Democratic party chairman, Lawrence F. O'Brien, announced this morning a \$1-million civil lawsuit against the Committee to Re-elect the President and the five suspects on grounds of invasion of privacy and the violation of civil rights of the Democrats.

Mr. O'Brien, speaking at a news conference, described the break-in, which was ostensibly to plant listening devices, as a "blatant act of political espionage."

John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General who is now President Nixon's campaign director, issued shortly thereafter a statement charging that the

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lawsuit "represents another example of sheer demagoguery on the part of Mr. O'Brien."

"I reiterate that this committee did not authorize and does not condone the alleged actions of the five men apprehended there," Mr. Mitchell said. "We deplore such activity."

At the White House, Ronald L. Ziegler, the press secretary, told newsmen that Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President on whose recommendation Mr. Hunt was hired as a consultant, has "assured me that he has in no way been in-

involved in this matter."

Washington police officials said that the consensus among the "law enforcement people" was that the break-in was not a well-financed operation planned from "up high," because it was "bungled too badly to have been the case."

Mr. Hunt, who worked at the White House in 1971 and this year after retiring from a top post with the Central Intelligence Agency, was said by Cuban sources to have met about two weeks ago in Miami with Bernard L. Barker, a wealthy realtor in that city, who is suspected of directing the attempt to install secret listening devices at the Democratic headquarters.

Mr. Barker was an aide to Mr. Hunt during the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961. Mr. Hunt's name and home telephone number were found in address books in possession of Mr. Barker and Eugenio R. Martinez, another of the suspects, when the police arrested them at gunpoint in the Democratic offices. Mr. Martinez is employed at Mr. Barker's Miami real estate company.

Sought by F.B.I. Agents

Although Mr. Hunt was reached by telephone at his suburban Maryland home on Sunday, subsequent attempts to talk to him have been unavailing.

Robert F. Bennett, president of the Robert R. Mullen Company, a Washington public relations concern employing Mr. Hunt as a full-time writer, said in an interview this afternoon that Mr. Hunt could not be found.

Mr. Bennett said that F.B.I. agents came to the offices of his company, at 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, yesterday morning looking for Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Bennett said that he found a message from Mr. Hunt this morning saying he had gone to New York for the day in connection with a television project in which the company is engaged. But, Mr. Bennett said, he could not reach him there.

"If he doesn't report to work here tomorrow morning, I'll suspend him from his job," Mr. Bennett said.

Mr. Hunt's home was telephoned yesterday and today the person answering said that he was out of town.

Mr. Ziegler confirmed that Mr. Hunt had been a part-time White House consultant in "intelligence" and "the flow of narcotics," but stressed that "we don't know where Mr. Hunt has been because he has not

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been involved in a consulting capacity with the White House since March."

Mr. Ziegler said that President Nixon was not concerned "about any allegation of the committing of a crime" and that "the appropriate investigations of that are taking place."

Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, chairman of the Republican National Committee, denied through a spokesman published reports that he had sent a telegram yesterday to his committee's members urging them to refrain from discussing the break-in with outsiders.

But the spokesman said that an "inter-office memo" was signed by Tom Wolck, the committee's director of communications, instructing his staff to refer all inquiries to him. The

memorandum was addressed to Senator Dole.

The Watergate Hotel management said that the F.B.I. had "subpoenaed certain guest records." Other informants said that investigators hoped to determine, among other things, who had paid the bills for the suspects' rooms.

Mr. O'Brien said earlier that nine persons from Miami, apparently including the men captured Saturday morning, stayed at the Watergate between May 26 and 29.

The Democratic National Committee had reported that on the night of May 28 an attempt had been made to break into their offices, which are situated in a building adjoining the hotel.

A spokesman for the hotel said, however, that "we have

been advised by the Federal authorities not to say any more" on the subject.

Of the five men arrested at the Democratic offices, four were from Miami and the fifth was James W. McCord, a security specialist for both the Republican National Committee and the Committee to Re-elect the President. Mr. McCord is not believed to have stayed at the hotel on either occasion.

All in C.I.A. Operations

In addition to Mr. Barker and Mr. Martinez, the other Miami-based suspects were Frank Sturgis and Virgilio R. Gonzales. All of them, along with Mr. Hunt and Mr. McCord, had been involved in the C.I.A.'s Cuban operations in 1961.

All five remained in jail today for the fourth day. No explanation was available either from the authorities or the men's lawyers on why they have not been freed on bail.

Douglas Caddy, who acted as a lawyer for Mr. Barker during his arraignment Saturday, could not be reached today for comment.

But Mr. Bennett, the president of the Mullen agency, said that Mr. Hunt and Mr. Caddy were "friends," adding that Mr. Caddy had "office space" in the Mullen agency up to two years ago.

Cuban sources in Miami said yesterday that Mr. Hunt had given Mr. Barker his calling card, with his home telephone number penciled on it, and instructed him to call if he ever needed him.

After Mr. Barker was arrested, his wife telephoned Mr. Caddy from Miami for assistance.

Also in Miami, Miguel R. Suarez, a business partner of Mr. Barker, said that he had no information on Mr. Barker's involvement in the break-in. Mr. Suarez was interviewed today by F.B.I. agents.



Associated Press

Lawrence F. O'Brien, left, Democratic party chairman, and Joseph A. Califano Jr., counsel, announcing the suit against the Committee for Re-election of the President.