

Demo HQ

O'Brien Claims Phone Tapped

Washington

Lawrence F. O'Brien said yesterday his telephone in Democratic National headquarters was tapped for several weeks prior to the abortive Watergate break-in and the eavesdroppers made daily transcripts of his confidential talks with leading Democrats.

O'Brien, then national Democratic chairman and now chairman of Senator George McGovern's presidential campaign, also said some of the Watergate break-in suspects had set out May 27 to bug McGovern's headquarters but failed.

His declarations to a news conference were the latest round in the steadily expanding controversy which began in the wee hours of June 17 when five men with eavesdropping equipment

were arrested inside Democratic headquarters at the posh Watergate complex in Washington.

TAPES

O'Brien said he had learned of the tapes, transcripts and unsuccessful attempt to bug McGovern headquarters on "unimpeachable authority."

He would not specify the source. But in refusing to elaborate on some points, insisted "I am never going to say anything that isn't fully documented."

O'Brien said his attorneys had asked the Justice Department for any information it has concerning his private papers, documents and telephone conversations, but the department had refused. The department has been investigating criminal aspects of the case while a federal grand jury has been taking testimony.

O'Brien has filed a \$1 million civil suit against the five men arrested.

O'Brien accused Attorney General Richard Kleindienst of "the most appalling foot-dragging" in the case. But he said "the conspiracy of silence of President Nixon, John Mitchell and Richard Kleindienst will not deter us."

O'Brien said monitors operated from the seventh floor of a motel across the street from the Watergate office building. "There were transcripts of conversations we know that," he said. "Who has them we don't know."

O'Brien said some of the Watergate suspects accompanied by other persons set out early May 27 to bug McGovern's pre-convention headquarters near the Capitol. But the attempt was abandoned at 3 a.m., he said, because of passersby in the area.

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