

Sensitive Radio Seen Bought by McCord

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A spokesman for a Rockville electronics firm said yesterday that James W. McCord Jr. identified himself as security chief for President Nixon's re-election committee and paid \$3,500 in cash when he bought a radio receiver last May.

The receiver allegedly was used to pick up wiretapped conversations at the Democrats' Watergate headquarters.

John Gearing, of the Watkins-Johnson Company, said McCord left a Committee for the Re-Election of the President business card with a salesman when the receiver, which normally sells for \$6,250, was purchased.

The firm's records say that McCord, one of seven defendants in the Watergate bugging case scheduled for trial Jan. 8, paid only \$3,500 because the receiver was a floor model used for sales demonstrations.

The indictment, returned Sept. 15, charges that on May 10 McCord purchased a radio receiving system "capable of receiving intercepted wire and oral communications."

Sources close to the Watergate investigation said the receiver mentioned in the indictment was the one purchased by McCord from Watkins-Johnson. Gearing said the FBI had taken copies of his company's records relating to McCord's purchase.

Gearing said McCord left the impression with the company salesman that the radio receiver was to be used by the President's re-election committee.

Records of campaign expenditures by the President's re-election committee however, show no payment to McCord for such a purchase. Disclosure of all campaign expenditures is required by law.

An internal "confidential/eyes only" memo of the President's re-election committee dated two days after the June 17 Watergate break-in purports to list all the committee payments to McCord and lists no amount resembling the \$3,500 allegedly paid for the radio receiver.

The memo, from Nixon committee personnel director Robert C. Odle to deputy campaign director, Jeb S. Magruder, lists 18 separate payments to McCord, the highest being \$1,091.56 for security services.

Ralph Grimm, manager of the Watkins-Johnson Company, said his company sells very few of the receivers because they are handmade, very compact and extra sensitive for picking up weak signals.

Though not designed to pick up bugs or telephone wiretaps, Grimm said that is "a possible use" for them.

He said the receivers are normally sold to "government and those who work for government," though there is no prohibition on selling them to others.

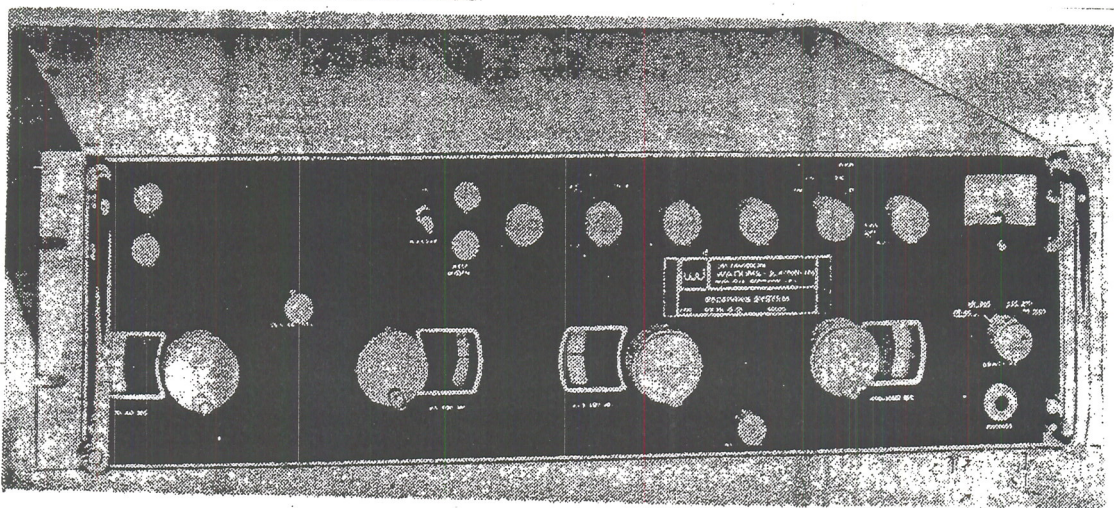
Alfred C. Baldwin III, the former FBI agent who has said he participated in the Watergate bugging, apparently made reference to the receiver in a copyrighted article in the Los Angeles Times.

Baldwin, who is expected to be the chief government witness in the Watergate trial, gave this description in The Times article of monitoring telephone conversations at the Democrats' headquarters:

"I would keep an eye on the little TV-type screen on the monitoring unit. A constant line ran across the screen when the tapped phone was not in use. When someone started using the phone, the line would scatter and I would quickly put on the earphones."

Baldwin described the receiver as "a sophisticated receiving set, which McCord later said was worth \$15,000."

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A sensitive radio receiver, similar to the one shown above, was sold to James W. McCord Jr., a Rockville firm says.