

Watergate Jurors Hear Hunt, President's Ex-Aide

NYTimes

By WALTER RUGABER MAR 28 1973
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 27—E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted Watergate conspirator who is a former consultant to the White House, appeared for more than an hour today before a Federal grand jury.

Hunt's attorney, who said his client would testify further tomorrow, indicated that he had continued to maintain that he knew of no spying on the Democrats by "higher-ups" in the Government.

Government lawyers, who declined comment on the grand jury proceeding, made no move to obtain a grant of immunity from further prosecution to force Hunt to answer questions.

Meanwhile, a special Senate committee investigating political espionage in last year's Presidential campaign announced that James W. McCord Jr. would testify under oath in a secret session tomorrow.

McCord, who was found guilty of spying on the Democratic national committee headquarters, told the Senate committee's staff that two figures in the Nixon Administration had prior knowledge of his wiretapping operations.

In another development, a number of prominent Republicans called on the White House to provide information on the Watergate affair and on reports of related efforts to disrupt the Democratic campaign.

Senator James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York, charged that the Administration was making "less than a heroic effort" to establish the truth and complained of "less than wholehearted cooperation" in the investigations.

"We are coming to the moment of truth about Water-

Continued on Page 33, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

gate," the Senator said, "and I hope that we get that moment of truth. If there is a crime involved, I would like to see it exposed."

Senator John G. Tower of Texas, who is chairman of the Republican Policy Committee,

emerged from a luncheon meeting of the panel to say that it was "in the best interests of the White House that this whole thing be bared."

Senator Norris Cotton of New Hampshire joined Mr. Tower in calling on the President to allow his counsel, John W. Dean 3d, to testify on the Watergate case. Mr. Nixon has said Mr. Dean would invoke executive privilege.

The White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, hinted today that Mr. Dean, while refusing a Senate summons, might appear before a grand jury if called. He was not explicit on the point, however.

The White House also declined comment on Senator Buckley's statement and said there was "no substance" to a report from Capitol Hill that Mr. Dean had offered to resign as counsel to the President.

Also Named Magruder

Mr. Nixon's lawyer was named by McCord in two interviews with the Senate committee staff over the weekend as one of two officials with prior knowledge of the Watergate wiretapping program.

McCord also told the committee's chief counsel, Samuel Dash, that Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of the President's campaign organization, had known in advance of the bugging.

The White House, on behalf of Mr. Dean, and Mr. Magruder denied the statements.

Hunt was the second of seven men convicted in January of conspiracy, burglary and eavesdropping to be called before the grand jurors who had returned indictments in the case last fall and who were recalled yesterday.

The first was G. Gordon Liddy, who served as counsel to the Fund-raising unit of the Nixon campaign organization during the political spying. Liddy refused to answer at least 20 questions during an appearance yesterday.

The Government then brought Liddy before Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court and asked for a grant of immunity. The decision was delayed until later this week.

Hunt spent about an hour and 20 minutes in the grand jury room today. His lawyer, William O. Bittman of Wash-

ington, said that his client would return for further testimony tomorrow morning.

Takes Previous Stand

Pressed by reporters, Mr. Bittman indicated that Hunt had stood by a brief and somewhat cryptic statement he had made outside the courthouse after pleading guilty to the charges against him on Jan. 11.

"If you testify before a grand jury," he was asked then, "will your testimony implicate higher-ups or indicate there was a wider conspiracy than one now being tried?"

"I would testify as follows," he said, "that to my personal knowledge there was not."

He did not specify whether he knew as a fact that there were no higher-ups or that as far as he was aware there were none.

Four men who joined Hunt in pleading guilty at the January trial—Bernard L. Barker, Eugenio R. Martinez, Frank A. Sturgis and Virgilio R. Gonzalez—were also scheduled to go before the grand jury.

The four men, all from Miami, were given "provisional" sentences of 40 years in prison and were urged to cooperate with investigators. Hunt received a temporary sentence of 35 years.

The former White House official, who served as an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency for 20 years, recruited the four Miami men for the Watergate operation and a college student for spying on Senator George McGovern, the 1972 Democratic Presidential nominee.

Segretti Contact

He was also in contact with Donald H. Segretti, a young Southern California lawyer who has been charged with involvement in a widespread effort to disrupt Democratic political campaigns last year.

Hunt's role in the Watergate plot is considered even more central than the one played by McCord, who served as security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-election of the President until his arrest on June 17, 1972.

The decision to call McCord in a private session before the Senate's Select Committee to Investigate Presidential Cam-

paign Activities apparently provoked some debate on the seven-member panel.

Senator Lowell P. Weicker, a Connecticut Republican who said yesterday that he had been independently persuaded of White House involvement in the case, was understood to have demanded a public hearing for McCord.

Mr. Weicker was outvoted, 5 to 1, with Senator Joseph M. Montoya, Democrat of New Mexico, abstaining. Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., a Tennessee Republican who is vice chairman, said he hoped for public testimony "very promptly."

Ervin's View

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the North Carolina Democrat who is chairman, said he took the position that "you ought not to put a man in public hearings until you know what he's going to say."

Senator Baker said after a committee session today that Mr. Dash had been in contact with McCord since the weekend meetings with the convicted conspirator. The Senator added that the committee had power to vote immunity for McCord.

The committee witness is also scheduled to appear this week, possibly Thursday, before Judge Sirica. The unusual private meeting was arranged so that McCord could talk about details of the case.

Both forthcoming appearances by McCord were set up after he wrote a letter to the judge contending that "others" had been involved in the Watergate plot and that those caught had been pressured to "plead guilty and remain silent."

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the President's re-election committee said that the organization was considering employing additional personnel to help in the pending hearings and in extensive civil litigation.

Also, the Senate committee has hired a longtime figure in many Congressional investigations, Carmine Bellino, to investigate financial dealings in the case. Mr. Bellino is a certified public accountant.