

Mitchell Talks About Liddy



Jack Anderson

TOPPING ALL the other tactics used against the Democrats in the 1972 campaign, call girls were recruited to romance Democratic leaders and, between kisses, to wheedle political secrets from them at their Miami convention.

Senate investigators learned about this unique undercover operation from no less than ex-Attorney General John Mitchell. A summary of his confidential confession describes a meeting with Watergate ring-leader G. Gordon Liddy at the Justice Department on January 27, 1972.

"Liddy arrived," states the summary, "with massive charts of an intelligence gathering program which was a huge structural operation with people in different places with different code names and included, among other things, the use of electronic eavesdropping devices, a call girl ring for the Democratic National Convention and other intelligence gathering operations."

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MITCHELL claimed he was "horrified by the magnitude and the budget" of the Liddy proposal. He, therefore, "directed Liddy to take his charts and burn them." White House counsel John Dean, who also sat in on the session, agreed with Mitchell that the scheme "far exceeded anything of rationality."

Liddy came back on February 4, according to the summary, "with another intelligence gathering plan but this time without charts. Dean was present and informed Liddy that it was an insult to the Attorney General to bring up matters like this."

But Liddy apparently was undeterred

and his scheme strangely survived. By Mitchell's account, he was relaxing in Florida from the rigors of the ITT hearings when campaign director Jeb Magruder showed up with a paper outlining "an intelligence operation which he went through briefly and which included electronic surveillance."

"Mitchell told him," continues the summary, "he didn't want to hear anything of this type, and there was no question in Mitchell's mind that Magruder left Key Biscayne fully understanding Mitchell's position on electronic surveillance. Mitchell cannot understand how Magruder could have conceived that he had authority to commence such an operation."

The operation, presumably, included the kiss-and-tell project. Investigators have confirmed that call girls were recruited but have been unable to determine whether they were actually used.

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AFTER THE waterbuggers were arrested, Mitchell said "there were continual meetings both at the White House and CRP (campaign committee) concerning Watergate."

Apparently, these were meetings of the President's braintrust which, according to Mitchell, included top aides H.R. Halde- man, John Ehrlichman, Henry Kissinger, Charles Colson, William Timmons and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen.

Kissinger vigorously denied any participation in the Watergate strategy sessions. "Mitchell lied," Kissinger told us. "I never attended any meeting at which Watergate was discussed. I believed until April 1973 that the White House was not involved in Watergate."