

Spying Missions and 2 Wiretaps Laid to Ehrlichman by Officials

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By SEYMOUR M. HERSH JUN 6 1973
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WASHINGTON, June 5—John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's former chief domestic adviser, authorized a series of espionage missions and at least two previously undisclosed illegal wiretaps beginning in 1969 that were carried out by an ad hoc White House intelligence group, officials knowledgeable about the Watergate investigation said today.

In addition, the officials said, detailed planning for a number of White House-ordered burglaries was authorized by Mr. Ehrlichman, although it could not be learned whether any such burglaries—including a

planned foray into the Brookings Institution here—actually took place.

Most of the operations were coordinated by John J. Caulfield and Anthony T. Ulasewicz, two former New York City policemen who began working for the White House in early 1969, the officials said, including an investigation into the background of Mario Biaggi, who was defeated in yesterday's New York Mayoral primary.

Mr. Biaggi, as a freshman Representative from the Bronx in 1969, bitterly criticized as "insulting" to Italian-Americans

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an early ear a nearly Nixon crime message to Congress calling for an attack on organized crime.

In addition, Mr. Ehrlichman's and Mr. Caulfield's informal White House group—described by knowledgeable sources as a precursor of the 1971 "plumbers' operation set up by Mr. Nixon to investigate the Pentagon papers leak—also questioned a number of participants in an eyewitnesses to the massacre at My Lai in Southern Vietnam in late 1969 or early 1970 to determine if the first newspaper accounts of the atrocity were correct.

One Government investigator said that a full description of the White House group's work would be provided to the Senate Watergate committee by John W. Dean 3d, the former White House counsel, who is scheduled to testify next Wednesday, barring court intervention.

Testimony by Caulfield

In his televised testimony last month before the Senate Watergate committee, Mr. Caulfield, a former undercover policeman in New York, gave a far from complete description of his initial assignment inside the White House.

"During the first three years," he said, "first on orders from Mr. Ehrlichman and later, in some instances, on orders from Mr. John Dean, Mr. Ulasewicz, under my supervision, performed a variety of investigative functions, reporting the results of his findings to the White House through me. I do not fully recall all of the investigations performed in this fashion."

Officials said that, in addition to about 18 clandestine intelligence missions, Mr. Caulfield and Mr. Ulasewicz were directly involved in the installation of a wiretap on telephone lines leading to the Georgetown residence of Joseph Kraft, the syndicated columnist.

One closely involved person said that the wiretap was installed in early 1969 at the express direction of Mr. Ehrlichman. "Caulfield didn't do it personally," the person said, "but got someone else to look at it."

At one point before the installation of the wiretap, the person said: "Caulfield asked Ehrlichman why they [the White House] didn't go to the F.B.I. since he had been told to put it in for national security purposes."

"He was told by Ehrlichman, 'Well, the F.B.I.'s a sieve. Things get out that way.'"

A wiretap was installed and began to operate, the same source said, although Mr. Kraft was out of town at the time. Before the columnist returned, he said, Mr. Ehrlichman got in touch with Caulfield "and said to forget it; they had it another way."

The source said that Mr. Caulfield assumed that the White House had prevailed upon J. Edgar Hoover, then the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to take over the bugging of Mr. Kraft.

Mr. Caulfield ordered his men to return to the Kraft residence and remove the wiretap, the source said, a high-risk operation involving the use of a ladder outside the second floor of the home.

Mr. Caulfield knows of at least one other wiretap that was installed on Mr. Ehrlichman's orders outside the normal F.B.I. channels, the official source said. That wiretap involved someone "in the family," he added cryptically, in an apparent reference to someone in the Administration.

It could not be learned whether the Federal prosecutors in the Watergate case were planning to conduct a separate investigation into the allegations of illegal wiretapping.

Both the prosecutors and the Senate Watergate committee are known to have received full accounts of the ad hoc White House group's activities from Mr. Dean, Mr. Caulfield and Mr. Ulasewicz.

Papers Reported Sought

One closely involved person said that the planned break-in into the Brookings Institution, a liberal Washington research group, was discussed sometime in 1971. Mr. Caulfield was told, the source said, that high White House officials "wanted some papers out of somebody's file." He did not know, he said, whose file was involved.

It has been widely reported that President Nixon personally authorized the wiretapping of 13 National Security Council and Pentagon aides as well as four newsmen in May, 1969, after what officials described as a serious news leak.

In late 1969, Morton H. Halperin, then a member of the council staff, resigned and became associated with Brookings, a relationship he still maintains. Mr. Halperin has also been associated with Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, whose Federal trial on charges stemming from his copying and releasing of the Pentagon papers recently ended in a mistrial. The papers were classified Government documents about the origins of the Vietnam war.

There is some evidence that Mr. Caulfield's ad hoc group was supplanted, at least in some

aspects, by the plumbers operation, which was organized in July, 1971.

In a civil suit deposition released today, Mr. Ehrlichman is quoted as commenting in September, 1971, G. Gordon Liddy, the former member of the plumbers group who later led the Watergate break-in team, was initially introduced "as the new man in place of Caulfield."

And Mr. Caulfield, in his Senate testimony, has noted somewhat plaintively that "in the spring of 1971, I began to notice that, for some reason, the amount of investigation work handled by Ulasewicz through me had diminished."

One closely involved source said that one of the main functions of Mr. Ulasewicz, who had been hired through Mr. Caulfield after spending 20 years in police work, was to attempt to infiltrate large demonstrations in Washington. "Tony would just stand around with them and listen," the source said. "It was silly and they might just as well have had the local police do it."

It has been previously reported that Mr. Ulasewicz was hired by Mr. Ehrlichman after a clandestine meeting in mid-1969 at La Guardia Airport and paid in cash by Herbert W. Kalmbach, who was then President Nixon's personal attorney. The funds for Mr. Ulasewicz were reported to have been authorized by H. R. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff.

Appear at TV Hearings

Both Mr. Caulfield and Mr. Ulasewicz achieved national prominence during the first of the televised Senate Watergate hearings last month when it was alleged that they had both participated in a White House-directed effort early this year to offer executive clemency to James W. McCord Jr., one of the Watergate conspirators, in return for his silence.

One knowledgeable official said that most of the Caulfield-Ulasewicz assignments "involved specific events that allowed them to check out press reports to seek what else they could learn that wasn't in the newspapers—like My Lai." "That's not illegal," the official declared.

Asked if Mr. Ehrlichman was directing the White House intelligence operation, the official said: "Oh God, yes. Caulfield wasn't thinking these things up."

The only surveillance project that was initiated by the two men was the investigation into the background of Mr. Biaggi, their former colleague on the New York police force, the official said, although that effort also received White House sanction.