

Page 4—S.F. Examiner
Fri., Aug. 25, 1972 ☆

A Quick Bugging Trial Plan

Judge Urges Early Start

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — A federal judge says he wants to begin a civil trial in the alleged bugging attempt of Democratic National Headquarters before the Nov. 7 presidential election to "insure the right of the public to know."

"It may be that, so far as the public is concerned, their interest might be better served by having a civil trial before the election," Judge Charles R. Richey told surprised attorneys yesterday at what they had expected to be a routine procedural hearing.

The \$1 million civil suit filed by the Democratic National Committee against the Committee to Re-elect the President and five suspects in the alleged bugging stems from an attempted June 17 break-in at Democratic Headquarters in the plush Watergate apartment-commercial complex.

Jury Probe

A federal grand jury also has been investigating the case to determine whether criminal indictments are warranted. A Justice Department spokesman said that indictments may be handed down early next month.

Two Houston oil execu-

tives testified yesterday before the grand jury on GOP campaign donations linked to the break-in, according to government sources.

One of the oilmen, William C. Liedtke Jr., is southwest regional fund-raiser for Nixon's re-election campaign and president of the Houston-based Pennzoil United, Inc. Also called as a witness was Roy J. Winchester, Pennzoil's vice president for public relations.

They reportedly were questioned about \$89,000 understood to have come from Nixon campaign funds that wound up in a Miami bank account of one of the Watergate suspects, Bernard Barker, a former employe of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Report Postponed

Meanwhile, the General Accounting Office, investigative arm of Congress, still has not released its report on an investigation of Republican campaign funds. The report, expected Tuesday, was postponed after GAO officials conferred with Maurice H. Stans, former commerce secretary who now heads Nixon's campaign fund-raising.

The official purpose of the GAO audit is to determine whether contributions conformed with provisions of a new election law that requires making public all campaign contributions received after last April 7. GAO said yesterday that an announcement about its findings would come "within a few days."

Lawrence F. O'Brien, chairman of Sen. George McGovern's national campaign, has charged that the White House was using "every ounce of political muscle" to block release of the GAO report.

"The plain truth is this: We are now witnessing one of the most outrageous and blatant political cover-ups of this generation," O'Brien said.

22 NOV 6