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3 Watergate Defendants Say They Were Bugged

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Washington

Three defendants in the Watergate bugging case charged yesterday that unknown persons have been tapped and followed them since the government's investigation of the case began.

The defendants — E. Howard Hunt, G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord Jr., all formerly connected to the White House or the Committee for the Re-Election of the President — asked United States District judge John J. Sirica to suppress information collected by the alleged surveillance.

REQUEST

Asking for a hearing to determine who was behind the surveillance, the defendants urged Sirica to conduct it "even if the government denies" responsibility.

In a separate motion, the four other defendants charged with breaking into Democratic national head-

quarters June 17 asked to be tried separately from the three who have ties to the Nixon Re-Election Committee or the White House.

The four — Virgilio Gonzalez, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez and Bernard Barker — contended they are alleged to be "non-politically involved" and that to try them with the others in a case with "massive political overtones" would deny them a fair trial.

DETAILS

Liddy, McCord and Hunt detailed the surveillance they said was conducted of them in affidavits filed with their motion.

Liddy told of eluding a car that was following him sometime in September and of shaking two men tailing him on foot as he left his lawyer's office Tuesday. Liddy, a former FBI agent and White House aide, was finance counsel at the President's re-election committee at the time of the Watergate break-in.

McCord, former security coordinator for the Nixon committee, said detection equipment indicated his home and office phones were tapped frequently after his arrest during the break-in.

Hunt, a former White House consultant and ex-Central Intelligence Agency agent, said that during a September 22 telephone conversation about the case with his lawyer, William O. Bittman, he heard someone on the line state: "That's Bittman."

Hunt asked the court to order the government to return to him notebooks, letters, pictures and jewelry that he said federal agents unlawfully removed from his office.

In another of several motions filed yesterday, the deadline set by Sirica for pretrial filings, Hunt asked that the trial be moved outside Washington because of what he contended was massive, prejudicial publicity in the capital.