

Judge Orders L.A. Times to Produce Tape

By Lawrence Meyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica agreed to a defense request yesterday to subpoena tapes and documents associated with lengthy interviews conducted by the Los Angeles Times with a key prosecution witness in the trial of seven men charged in the Watergate bugging and break-in.

William Thomas, editor of the Los Angeles Times, informed of Sirica's decision, said last night:

"As in the past, we'll oppose the subpoena of either our people or our unpublished material in court." Thomas said the policy of the Times "always has been" to oppose the release of unpublished materials.

The material sought by the defense concerns interviews conducted by Los Angeles Times reporters Jack Nelson and Ronald J. Ostrow of Alfred C. Baldwin III.

In the interviews, spanning more than five hours according to stories based on them, Baldwin told how he was employed to monitor electronically telephone conversations at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate.

According to the stories, which appeared in The Washington Post on Oct. 5 and Oct. 6, Baldwin said he was instructed by James W. McCord Jr., one of the seven men who will be tried, to monitor the conversations.

McCord at the time was security director for President Nixon's re-election committee. Baldwin also described what he said were activities of E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, both former White House aides and defendants in the Watergate case.

The request for the subpoena of the interview materials was made by William O. Bittman, Hunt's lawyer, during a hearing on pretrial motions conducted yesterday for more than six hours. During the course of the hearing, Sirica denied almost all the more than 30 motions presented by the defense.

They involved defense attempts to inspect evidence held by the prosecution, delay the trial or change its location, cite Baldwin for contempt of court for allowing The Times to interview him and dismiss the indictment.

Among the motions that Sirica reserved for a later decision was one filed by Hunt's attorney seeking the return of certain materials, including electronic equipment, found in Hunt's office in the Executive Office Building.

According to papers filed in Court by the prosecution Tuesday, Hunt's office was searched two days after five men were arrested inside the Democratic headquarters.

The papers said that the search of Hunt's office was ordered on June 19—two days after the Watergate incident—by John W. Dean III, legal counsel to the President, after Dean "received information that Hunt, an alleged White House employee, was possibly linked to the Watergate break-in."

Hunt had been employed as a White House consultant in July, 1971, to review classified documents, including the Pentagon papers. The court papers said Hunt was last used as a White House consultant on March 29. Bittman said in Court yesterday, however, that Hunt was in his Executive Office Building office "on almost a daily basis" after March 29.

In Hunt's office, according to the Court papers, an assistant of Dean and Secret Service agents found a safe. When the safe was opened, classified documents and an attache case were found inside, according to the papers.

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