

Ziegler tells phone to probe news leaks

By Thomas B. Ross
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WASHINGTON — President Nixon's spokesman declared Tuesday it was not his "understanding" that Watergate defendant E. Howard Hunt Jr. was given a special private phone in the White House.

Press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler acknowledged that such a phone had been installed but insisted it was used by two other aides to track down news leaks and had no connection with the Watergate incident.

Ziegler sought to discount a Washington Post report, published in the Sun-Times last Friday, that the phone was used "almost exclusively" by Hunt for conversations with co-defendant Bernard L. Barker.

Ziegler said the phone was installed so that Egil Krogh and David Young could track down leaks of "national security affairs" matters in 1971. He asserted that it was not connected in Jan. 1972, and, therefore, it was "folly to associate it" with the Watergate

events the following June.

Hunt was implicated in the break-in at Democratic National Headquarters by money traced to the Committee for the Re-election of the President. His wife died last Friday in the United Air Lines crash in Chicago while carrying more than \$10,000 in cash.

The Post's allegations, the Times in a long series of investigative reports on the Watergate scandal, were based on statements by a former White House secretary, Kathleen Cheney, who said the phone bills were sent to her home "because they didn't want any ties with the White House."

Ziegler skirted a flat denial of the Post report but said it was "my understanding" that Hunt was not involved in the Krogh-Young investigation.

Miss Chenow was quoted as saying the investigative team also included Hunt and Gordon Liddy, another Watergate defendant.

Hunt, a longtime employe of the Central Intelligence Agency, reportedly is seeking to

have his case tried separately from the other defendants. He is also strenuously denying any connection between the money carried by his wife and the Watergate affair.

But he conceded in an interview with the New York Times: "I don't know how it would be possible to convince anybody of that. . . . There was no attempt made to conceal it. We reported it immediately to the United Air Lines representatives."

According to the Times, Hunt said the money was intended as an investment, to be placed by Mrs. Hunt's cousin, Harold C. Carlstead, a Chicago accountant with substantial investments in the motel business.

Hunt was quoted as saying the investment had been "under consideration for a long period of time" and last Friday "seemed an apropos time."