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Executive Phone Used to Hunt

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A special White House telephone, reportedly used for numerous conversations between two defendants in the Watergate bugging case, was actually installed for use by Nixon administration officials investigating leaks to the news media, according to presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler.

In making the first White House acknowledgement that such an investigation took place, Ziegler said the special telephone was installed to permit confidential "information to flow freely to those involved" in tracking down the source of news leaks in late 1971.

According to a former White House personal secretary, the private, nongovernment telephone line was used almost exclusively for conversations between former White House consultant E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Bernard L. Barker, both of whom have been indicted in the break-in and alleged bugging attempt at Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate here.

The secretary, Kathleen Chenow, told The Washington Post in an interview last week that Hunt was among a group of self-labeled "Plumbers" who investigated news leaks to the media, but said the special telephone appeared unrelated to those duties.

Ziegler was questioned by reporters yesterday about the Chenow interview, particularly her statements that bills for the special telephone were sent to her home in Alexandria and that she then submitted them to the office of John Ehrlichman for payment by

the White House. Ehrlichman is President Nixon's principal adviser for domestic affairs.

Asked who paid the bills for the telephone, Ziegler said yesterday, "I don't know." He confirmed Miss Chenow's report that Ehrlichman supervised the work of "The Plumbers", but insisted that Ehrlichman knew nothing about the special telephone.

According to Miss Chenow, the special White House team investigating news leaks was headed by Egil (Bud) Krogh, an assistant to Ehrlichman, who has been nominated to be under secretary of Transportation; David Young, a member of the National Security Council staff; Hunt, and G. Gordon Liddy, who also was indicted in the Watergate case.

Miss Chenow worked in a basement office in the Executive Office Building shared by Hunt, Liddy and Young during 1971 and early 1972.

Ziegler said yesterday that "to the best of my knowledge," Liddy was not assigned to work on the project. When asked if Hunt worked on it, he responded, "I don't believe so, no."

Miss Chenow told The Post that the investigation of administration leaks to the news media focused on how The New York Times obtained the Pentagon Papers and the source of National Security Council documents quoted by columnist Jack Anderson.

Asked if "The Plumbers" had identified the sources of the leaks, Ziegler said "pretty much so," but declined to answer whether any individuals were disciplined or fired as a result.

In a 90-minute telephone interview last Thursday, Miss Chenow said arrangements for

the installation of the special telephone and billing it to her home were made by Hunt, Liddy, Young and John Campbell, an assistant in Ehrlichman's office.

Asked why the phone was listed in her name at her Alexandria address, Miss Chenow said, "That's a good question: they apparently wanted it in my name because they didn't want any ties with the White House—for what reason I don't know."

She added, "That was Mr. Hunt's phone. It was put in for me to answer and take messages for him."

The phone rang "an average of once a week, sometimes two or three times a week," she said, and the caller usually identified himself as Bernard Barker. "He was about the only one who ever called," Miss Chenow said, and Hunt was the only person to make outgoing calls.

Ziegler said yesterday that it "would be folly" to associate use of the telephone with the alleged bugging of Democratic headquarters last May and June, because the special phone line was in use only from August, 1971 to March, 15, 1972.

According to the C&P Telephone Co. official in charge of White House service for the past 25 years, the phone installed in Miss Chenow's name was the first in his experience to be billed to the home of a White House employee.

Ziegler said yesterday that "this has been a situation that has existed in the past; there have been private phone extensions."

Meanwhile, there was no exact explanation yesterday of why the wife of one of the Watergate bugging defendants

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was carrying \$10,000 in cash when she was killed in the United Airlines crash in Chicago on Friday.

The \$10,000 in \$100 bills was found in the purse of Dorothy Hunt, according to Chicago police.

In a New Times interview, Hunt was quoted yesterday as saying that the money was for a "business investment" which he called "confidential." The investment purportedly involved Mrs. Harold C. Carlstead and her husband, who is an accountant with investments in the motel business near Chicago. Mrs. Carlstead was identified as a cousin of Mrs. Hunt.

A source in the FBI said yesterday that the bureau was investigating the source of the \$10,000 to determine whether it is related to the Watergate case.

Chicago police authorities say that the \$100 bills found in Mrs. Hunt's purse do not appear to be part of a withdrawal of \$100 bills made from a Miami bank last April by Barker, one of the seven Watergate suspects.

The authorities said this was because the money found in Mrs. Hunt's purse was old and none of the bills had sequential serial numbers, while the \$100 bills traced to the Watergate suspects were new and numbered in sequence.

When five of Hunt's co-defendants were arrested inside Democratic headquarters on June 17, \$5,300 in \$100 bills was found on their persons or in their hotel rooms.