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Watergate Jurors Face Guarded Life

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The room is roughly 9 by 12 feet. It has one bed, one chair, one bedside table, one four-drawer dresser and one mirror, one rug on a linoleum tile floor and one overhead light. The canary yellow walls are devoid of pictures or decoration.

Beige curtains cover the frosted windows, which are translucent but not transparent. The adjoining bathroom has a toilet, mirror and a sink. No shower. That's down the hall.

The room is in neither a jail nor a monastery. It is located on the seventh floor of the United States District Courthouse here. For the next week, month, three months or however long it takes, this room and 17 others just like it will be home for the 18 men and women—12 jurors and six alternates—selected to decide the guilt or innocence of the seven men charged in the Watergate bugging case that begins Monday.

Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, who appointed himself to try the

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case, announced over 10 defense objections in October that he would sequester the Watergate jury to insulate its members from publicity that might prejudice their deliberations.

Defense lawyers said at the time Sirica announced his intention to sequester the jury that the move itself was prejudicial, that jurors would blame the defendants for their seclusion.

In some respects, prisoners have more rights than the Watergate jurors will have. The Watergate jurors will be permitted to watch television in two small day-rooms on the courthouse's seventh and eighth floors where they will be staying. A deputy U.S. marshal will be present, however, to turn off the set the moment any mention is made concerning the trial.

The jurors will be allowed

to read newspapers — once the marshals have clipped out any stories that concern the trial. They will be allowed to make telephone calls, with a marshal listening in to make sure no one discusses the case. They will be allowed to receive and open mail but, before they read it, the marshal will read it to make sure nothing about the trial is discussed.

Jurors will not be allowed to see their families or friends.

Twice a day, for breakfast and lunch, the jurors will be escorted by deputy marshals to a special dining room in the courthouse basement where they will eat. A deputy will sit at the tables with them, with instructions to interrupt any conversation that touches on the trial. Jurors customarily are instructed by the judge at the outset of a trial not to discuss the trial with anyone — including other jurors —

until they have heard all the evidence.

At night, the jurors will be escorted out of the courthouse by deputy marshals and taken to a restaurant for dinner. When juries have been sequestered here in the past, they have been taken to movies or other diversions in the evening at government expense.

Arrangements will be made to have family or friends pick up dirty laundry and leave clean clothing for the jurors.

On weekends, Sirica says, the jurors will be taken on trips — with the ever-present deputy marshals. On Sundays, the jurors will be taken by deputies to church if they wish.

Estimates of how long the trial will take range from six weeks to three months. The jury that tried Charles Manson and three codefendants in Los Angeles was sequestered nine months in a hotel. During that period, one juror lost her job, another's home was burglarized twice with no one to look after it and another suffered asthma attacks from the pressure.

The Manson jurors stayed in a hotel with weekly conjugal visits arranged for married jurors. The Watergate jurors will stay in the courthouse, at a savings of \$400 a day, the U.S. Marshal's office estimates. Meals and other expenses will cost about \$17 a day per juror. The cost of salaries is \$50 a day for each deputy marshal. The number of marshals detailed for the trial has not been disclosed for security reasons.

The last time a jury was sequestered here was last May when Sirica ordered

the jury hearing the week-long first-degree murder trial of Ralph and Tony Lee to be kept in a hotel. At that time, the U.S. Attorney was using rooms on the seventh floor as offices, preventing the space from being used for jurors. Prosecution lawyers have since moved out of the rooms.

The rooms on the seventh and eighth floors of the courthouse have been used infrequently to house jurors