

Hunt Will Face Renewed Quiz By Grand Jury

By Carl Bernstein
and Bob Woodward

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As a result of pleading guilty to his role in the conspiracy to bug Democratic headquarters, E. Howard Hunt Jr. will be called before a federal grand jury to tell "what knowledge he has, if any, of the involvement of others in the so-called Watergate case."

That statement, made in U.S. District Court yesterday by Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert, means that the Watergate grand jury will be reconvened to hear the testimony of Hunt, the former White House consultant who has thus far remained silent about the events that led to the June 17 break-in at Democratic headquarters.

Silbert, asked by reporters to elaborate on the upcoming grand jury appearance, would not say if Hunt would be questioned about other undercover political activities allegedly undertaken against the Democrats. Silbert touched on reported plans for such activities in his opening arguments.

The prosecutor also declined to answer whether the government has received any assurances from Hunt that he will name any persons—excluding his codefendants—who might have known about the bugging or other undercover activities.

Other sources, meanwhile, reported that none of Hunt's testimony would be used in the current prosecution of his codefendants, but would only figure in the exploration of new charges. The sources stressed that, at present, there is no indication that further indictments or charges are forthcoming.

Hunt's lawyer, William O. Bittman, the ex-CIA agent, acknowledged that his client was, in effect, "pleading to the entire indictment" and admitting his role in the conspiracy outlined to the jury by Silbert only minutes before.

Only when Bittman pointed out that the plea could lead to as many as 25 years in prison did Hunt flinch, and the attorney then spelled out the counts to which Hunt wanted to plead:

- Conspiring to obtain information from the Democrats by bugging their offices, wiretapping their telephones, stealing their records and photographing their documents.

- Breaking into and entering the Democrats' Watergate headquarters on June 17th.

- "Willfully, knowingly and unlawfully" intercepting the "wire communications received by and sent from telephones located in the offices and headquarters of the Democratic National Committee."

Bittman then asked Chief Judge John J. Sirica to dismiss the remaining charges against Hunt—attempted interception of oral communications; attempted interception of wire communications; and an additional burglary charge—as agreed to by Silbert's office a week earlier.

Both Silbert and Bittman told Judge John G. Sirica that Hunt's plea effectively rendered those charges moot, because Hunt had already admitted to all the allegations in the indictment, and he could receive no additional imprisonment for them under the court's concurrent sentencing rules.

In entering Hunt's plea,

Bittman asked Judge Sirica to defer jailing Hunt until after the Watergate trial is completed and sentencing is imposed. The judge reminded the attorney and Hunt that "it is the practice of this court" to send defendants to jail after they enter a guilty plea—"in practically all cases—whether it is white collar



Sketch by Betty Wells

William O. Bittman, defense attorney, stands as he says his client, E. Howard Hunt Jr., (seated) could be sentenced to as much as a 25-year jail sentence.

crime or crimes of violence . . . You ought to have that in mind; Mr. Hunt ought to have that in mind," said the judge.

Noting that "Mr. Hunt's wife was tragically killed a month ago in an airplane crash," Bittman appealed to Sirica to allow Hunt to remain free until the ex-White House aide can make ar-

rangements for the care of his four children, aged 9 to 22.

He also called attention to "Mr. Hunt's own present medical condition," and revealed that government doctors had recently examined the defendant. Hunt has lost 14 pounds in the past month, Bittman told the judge.