

Watergate Defendant's Guilty Plea

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Washington

Watergate case defendant E. Howard Hunt Jr. pleaded guilty to all six charges against him yesterday but said he had no knowledge of any higher officials of the Nixon administration being involved in political espionage.

Looking pale and grim as he faced reporters outside the federal courthouse, Hunt said that "to my personal knowledge" —if called before a grand jury—he could not implicate any White House or Republican officials.

He said the government was "substantially correct" in its opening trial statement Wednesday that he and G. Gordon Liddy, both former White House aides, principally organized the bugging of Democratic National Committee offices and led unsuccessful attempts to plant an eavesdropping device in the Washington headquarters of Senator George S. McGovern (Dem-S.D.).

Meanwhile, trial of Liddy and five others accused in the Watergate episode last summer continued in the courtroom of chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

ADVICE

The jury was not told of Hunt's plea. Sirica simply advised the jurors, who are being sequestered, that "you are no longer to be concerned with the case of the U.S. vs. E. Howard Hunt Jr."

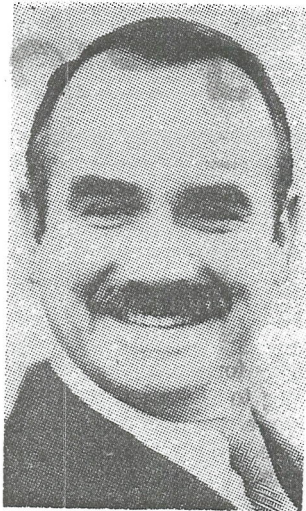
The judge denied a motion by defense attorneys, made in his chambers, that a mistrial be granted on grounds the jury may deduce from Hunt's absence that he has pleaded guilty.

One juror, in fact, was ordered excused when it was found he learned of Hunt's

plea during a phone call from his wife. An alternate juror took his place.

As was the case on Wednesday, jurors were absent from the jury box yesterday when Hunt, 54, a former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, pleaded guilty to three more charges

See Back Page



UPI Telephoto

G. GORDON LIDDY
His trial goes on

GUILTY

From Page 1

of second degree burglary and attempted bugging.

He had previously pleaded guilty to three major charges of conspiracy, bugging and burglary. But Sirica said he would not accept Hunt's plea unless it included all six charges against him.

"Did you commit all of those acts?" the judge said.

"I did, your honor," Hunt replied.

No date for sentencing was set. Sirica said Hunt could receive a maximum sentence of more than 30 years imprisonment and a \$40,000 fine.

BOND

He set bond for Hunt at \$100,000, noting the defendant fled to Los Angeles last summer when he learned FBI agents wanted him for questioning in the Watergate break-in. Hunt was in custody about four hours before posting bond.

He told reporters he made bond by assigning the proceeds of a \$225,000 life insurance policy on his wife, who

was killed last month in a Chicago plane crash.

"Anything I may have done I believed to be in the best interests of my country," Hunt told reporters.

"With the tragic death of my wife, I felt I could not sustain the experience of a long trial. I felt I should be with my four children. I hoped that my plea might be taken into consideration at my sentencing later on."

SEGRETTI

Hunt said he knew of no wider espionage campaign against Democrats than the government has already alleged. Government prosecutors, however, have not included in their case the activities of Los Angeles lawyer Donald H. Segretti.

At least eight persons have told reporters they were approached by Segretti in late 1971 and asked to spy upon Democratic presidential candidates. Segretti told some he was working for the White House. According to government sources, Segretti received thousands of dollars from Newport Beach, Calif., attorney Herbert W. Kalmbach, President Nixon's personal lawyer.

Earl J. Silbert, chief assistant U.S. attorney, told Sirica that Hunt would be summoned before a federal grand jury at a later date to see if he knew about the involvement of others.

TESTIMONY

In testimony at the trial, Thomas James Gregory, 25, a student at Brigham Young University, said Hunt hired him for \$175 a week from last February through June 15 to infiltrate the Washington headquarters of McGovern and Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem-Me.).

He said Hunt wanted information about the senators' schedules, public appearances, campaign personnel and any dissensions or quarrels in their organizations.

Gregory said Hunt later introduced him to Liddy and three other defendants in the Watergate case — James W. McCord Jr., then security director for President Nixon's re-election campaign, and Frank Sturgis and Virgilio Gonzalez, both of Mi-

ami.

He said Hunt, Liddy and McCord enlisted his support in attempts to bug McGovern's headquarters, but the efforts were unsuccessful.

Gregory testified that the FBI did not contact him until as recently as three weeks ago.

"An agent came to my apartment in Provo, Utah," Gregory said. "He asked me if I knew Hunt. I told him to sit down, that I had quite a bit to tell him."