

# THE STATES-ITEM

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The States-Item prints the news impartially. It supports what it believes to be right. It opposes what it believes to be wrong, without regard to party politics.

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## Gag on Watergate?

The Watergate political espionage trial seems to be collapsing and, with it, an opportunity for the American people to know who engineered the deplorable break-in of the Democratic party headquarters in Washington.

Five of the seven defendants in the trial have entered pleas of guilty. And, although the judge in the case has turned down a request from one of the remaining defendants for a mistrial, it now appears likely that the full story will not come out in the courtroom.

Disclosures from sources close to the defendants indicate the presence of extreme pressure to plead guilty.

If the trial does not materialize there is an even greater burden on Congress to get at the truth in this shameful affair.

It should be remembered that at least some of the men who participated in what amounts to guerrilla

warfare were extremely close to the Nixon Administration. One had been a White House adviser, in fact.

We are not talking about a Halloween prank. Five men were arrested at gunpoint inside the Watergate headquarters. One of the seven defendants received a large sum of money that passed through the campaign funds apparatus of the Republican party.

Ideally, the presidential election should provide the voter with a forum for judging the candidates.

The process is far from perfect, but what the five Rivergate defendants have admitted to was aimed at destroying that process altogether. They tampered with the right of the American voter to decide, on the merits, who should occupy the highest office in the land.

The American people have a right to know just how deeply this affair is tied in with the Nixon Administration.