

THE STATES-ITEM FEB 5 1973

Bugging Links to Nixon Staff Reported Hidden by Prober

NEW YORK (AP) — President Nixon's internal investigator of the Watergate affair withheld material that might have led federal lawmen to link administration figures to the case, Newsweek magazine reports.

The magazine said on Sunday that the report came from "a source close to the Watergate defense." The source was not named.

According to Newsweek, the source said White House special counsel John W. Dean III "had received orders to try to prevent federal investigators from tarnishing any figures in the President's inner circle."

Dean, the magazine said, ordered an aide to "clean out" the safe and office of E. Howard Hunt, a former White House consultant who last month pleaded guilty to burglary and wiretapping of the Democratic National Committee's offices in Washington's Watergate apartment complex.

"Dean has said that he reviewed and safeguarded the material for a week before turning it over to the FBI," Newsweek said. "But the defense source charged that Dean actually removed documents that might have led the G-men to administration top-siders."

The magazine did not say what the documents contained, and it did not name the "administration top-siders."

There was no immediate comment from Dean or the White House.