

Jury Told of 'Bug' Shield for Mitchell

So Links Could Be Denied

By John Hanrahan

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President Nixon's chief legal counsel, John W. Dean III, said prior to the bugging of the Watergate that the operation would have to be carried out in such a manner that then Attorney General John N. Mitchell would be able to deny his own involvement in it at a future date, according to information provided a federal grand jury here.

The allegation was made in a memorandum from convicted Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. to the grand jury. McCord said he was told about Dean's statement by his fellow Watergate conspirator, G. Gordon Liddy.

McCord also told the grand jury that his fellow conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Hunt's late wife, Dorothy, conveyed to him the message late last year that he could obtain clemency from President Nixon after serving a short time in jail if he remained silent at his trial and did not implicate others in the Watergate plot.

McCord said he assumed the offer was arranged by attorneys for the Committee for the Re-election of the President. The White House yesterday denied any knowledge of any deal for clemency for McCord.

A copy of McCord's memo was obtained by columnist Jack Anderson who yesterday permitted reporters to examine it and copies of grand jury transcripts he has obtained. Anderson recently has been publishing columns based on the grand jury transcripts.

See McCORD, A8, Col. 4

McCORD, From A1

In the memo, dated March 26, McCord said that the Watergate bugging was planned sometime after mid-February of last year at a meeting that included Mitchell, Dean, Liddy and Jeb Stuart Magruder, former White House aide and later deputy campaign chief. McCord said Liddy told him that Magruder contacted Mitchell to arrange the meeting.

McCord said Liddy told him that the discussion at the meeting "covered the pros and cons of various bugging-type operations." No decision was made at the meeting about proceeding with the operation, McCord said, "but the impression Liddy had seems to be that the operation would be approved."

"A few days later," McCord said, "Dean told Liddy that a way would have to be worked out to undertake the operation without directly involving the Attorney General so that he would have deniability about it at a future date."

"Dean told Liddy at this time that the funding for the operation would subsequently come to him through other than (the) regular Committee for the Re-election funding mechanism so that there would be no record of it. This was not further explained to me."

McCord said that about 30 days after the meeting in Mitchell's office in the Jus-

tice Department, "Liddy told me that the operation 'had been approved' and that the funding for it would be through shortly. My impression was that this word of approval came from Dean, although this was not specifically stated by Liddy. Dean was Liddy's legal counterpart at the White House..."

McCord told the grand jury the memo was a copy of the one he previously had given to investigators for the Senate select committee that is conducting its own probe into the Watergate bugging and other acts of political espionage and sabotage during last year's presidential campaign.

In his memo, McCord left open the possibility that some key evidence pertaining to the February, 1972, meeting may still exist.

McCord said that Liddy, in preparing for the meeting, had an unnamed firm prepare large charts at a cost of \$7,000. He did not disclose specifically what was on the charts. McCord said Liddy told him that Dean told him to destroy the charts after the meeting, "but Liddy said that he had paid so much for them that he did not plan to do so."

Also in preparation for the meeting, McCord said, Liddy "had drafted out in long-hand budget figures for various items of expense, and had discussed this and certain details of the overall operation with Jeb Magruder, so Liddy told me."

In direct testimony to the grand jury April 7, McCord also said:

- Mitchell "arranged for me to have access to FBI files on material or data," especially in regard to demonstrations that were being planned by various radical groups at the Republican convention in Miami.

- Robert C. Mardian, former deputy attorney general in charge of the Internal Security Division, arranged for McCord to meet regularly with John Martin, chief of the division.

- Mrs. Hunt, as has been previously reported, served as the conduit for funds to pay the defendants before the trial. McCord said Mrs. Hunt never made clear the source of the funds and suggested to him that the payments, rather than being "altruistic," may have been "intended as a means of keeping us quiet."

- McCord said he accepted his first payment of \$13,000 after the election and later received from Mrs. Hunt two more payments of \$3,000 each for "salary" and \$11,000 more for "legal fees."

In previously reported grand jury testimony, Gordon Strachan, former chief political aide to White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, said that Haldeman last year ordered him to give \$350,000 in cash to Frederick C. LaRue, a top campaign aide to Mitchell.



Associated Press

AFTER TESTIMONY—John N. Mitchell is surrounded by police and newsmen after talking to a U.S. grand jury in New York about a secret \$200,000 contribution to a Nixon re-election fund by Robert L. Vesco on April 10, 1972. Mitchell, who spent 3½ hours before the jury, said he answered questions “fully, frankly and freely.” Story, A7.