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McCord sought secret sky spy devices here

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HOWARD S. MARKS

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BUGGING DEVICES capable of reaching top-secret spy satellites were ordered by Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr., investigators have told CHICAGO TODAY.

Stevens Research Lab., operated by Michael Stevens at 2050 W. Devon Av., supplied between \$15,000 and \$20,000 worth of bugging and phone tapping equipment used to listen to conversations at the Democratic national headquarters in Washington's Watergate complex, they said.

Investigators were reported to be startled by the news that McCord, a former Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] agent, had ordered two room bugs and one phone bug capable of feeding into the nation's highly classified satellite communications network. Stevens is said to have close ties to the intelligence community. Investigators said at his shop, which opened in 1971, was partly financed by a federal intelligence organization, probably the Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA].

THE THREE BUGS that could transmit the communications satellites were never picked-up by McCord, Stevens told investigators. Stevens destroyed them after the

EXCLUSIVE

Watergate arrests on June 17, he was quoted as saying. Stevens refused to be interviewed.

Investigators, TODAY learned, found out that:

- The special bugs are about one-third the size of a cigaret package and can be placed anywhere in a room, but most probably under ceiling tile. The batteries can operate for 11 hours and can be changed easily.

- Knowing the orbit of a satellite a person using a simple compass could point the antenna of the bug toward the orbit. Because of the supersensitivity of the satellite, it could pick up the extremely low-powered signal. The low power of the signal makes detection of the device virtually impossible. The antenna is built into the case of the small device.

- The bugging device can pick up all conversations in the room where it is planted and transmit it as high as a fixed orbit-

ing satellite parked 22,300 miles above the earth in a synchronous orbit.

- The signal is then retransmitted to a ground receiving station and relayed to such places as CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., a suburb of Washington.

Stevens told investigators that the bugs were set to transmit on the frequency used by the CIA to track suspected double agents in Viet Nam.

In one case, a South Vietnamese officer was tracked by satellite thruout Viet Nam, including enemy-held territory.

The bugging device was a button on the officer's jacket, but it was strong enough to reach the satellite. A special aide assigned to the officer made sure that he wore the jacket daily.

Stevens reportedly said that McCord never mentioned the satellite network, but that, based on his knowledge, Stevens was certain that it was intended for feeding into the network.

Investigators said that the special high-powered bugs even included a device capable of sending a special signal to "lock" the satellite. Without the signal, it is impossible to feed into the satellite.

The satellites are used by the National Security Agency [NSA] and the CIA, it is

★ Please turn to page 23

* from page 3

believed, to pick up the transmissions from agents in areas where communications with the outside is impossible.

WHEN THE satellites are launched and in what orbits remain highly classified, but usually they are announced as "weather" satellites. They are launched from Cape Kennedy or other government launching sites in the United States.

Stevens told investigators that he was assisted by "experts" in assembling the special bugging equipment, but he didn't elaborate on who they were or their mission.

But investigators said that it took hundreds of man-hours to assemble the special equipment.

McCord's attorney, Bernard Fensterwald, in a phone interview from Washington said his client didn't know about the satellite communications equipment.

However, McCord, in a deposition taken on April 30 in the U. S. District Court in Washington, admitted that he had placed orders "for some additional equipment for a stronger output type; however, delivery never came because June 17 came first."

The deposition was taken in the civil suit brought by the Democratic National Committee against the Committee to Reelect the President.

In the deposition, McCord said that he bought 10 transmitters from Stevens Lab, which he identified as located on Montrose Avenue.

It actually was on Devon Avenue.

MCCORD SAID HE paid \$5,400 for the equipment. Investigators said Stevens told them that McCord owes him more than \$13,000.

McCord said in the deposition that the transmitters were for room use and for wired microphones.

The former director of Republican campaign security said he came here because "there was a contract firm in Chicago doing work for the committee; I visited their offices two or three times."

McCord didn't spell out what he meant by "contract firm" or "the committee."

In the deposition, McCord said he bought \$42,000 in equipment between April and June in Chicago, New York, Washington, and Connecticut.

He said he couldn't recall specifics because "he previously had given all his notes to the grand jury and he was recalling these figures from memory."

Stevens has told investigators that he fears for his life. His phone is unlisted, he is constantly looking for those who might be following him, and even his closest friends don't know his James Bond-type life, investigators said.

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