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McCord Says FBI Missed Evidence

By Lawrence L. Knutson
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James W. McCord Jr. says that if FBI agents had searched his auto and home soon after his arrest in the Watergate break-in, they would have found \$18,000 in \$100 bills and enough evidence to break the case in days.

McCord, who has been convicted for his part in the break-in, says the FBI was blocked from conducting a thorough investigation.

He urged Clarence Kelley, the bureau's new director, to permit senior FBI investigators to tell their own story of the probe.

A former Air Force officer and a former agent for both the FBI and CIA, McCord commented in the first of a three-part copyrighted series published in the August edition of the Armed Forces Journal, a magazine read chiefly by military officers.

He said the FBI was required to clear all important leads in the Watergate investigation with the Justice Department before pursuing them, a step he said that contradicts the bureau's standard operating procedure.

"Apparently many such leads were killed, either by the Department of Justice or the White House," McCord writes.

He contended senior FBI officials were turned down when they sought warrants to search for possible evidence in the possession of the Watergate defendants.

If such a search had been

conducted as late as four weeks after the Watergate arrests on June 17, 1972, agents would have found electronic eavesdropping equipment used in the Watergate surveillance and tape recorders and electric typewriters belonging to White House consultant E. Howard Hunt Jr., McCord said.

"In my residence, they would have found additional electronic equipment related to the overall Watergate operation; \$18,000 in \$100 bills left over from the operation, subsequently used for lawyers' fees; some private copies of recent wiretap logs, which were later destroyed . . . and some penciled notes from January and February, 1972, mentioning not only John Mitchell's name but the names of John Dean and Jeb Magruder as meeting with Mitchell during those early 1972 months to discuss the Watergate break-in.

"All of this documentary material I destroyed during July, 1972," McCord said.

"The equipment I either buried or disposed of in the Potomac River."

"Thus," he said, "the search that senior FBI personnel sought of my residence would have led immediately to John Mitchell, Jeb Magruder, John Dean, my equipment suppliers, the internal security division of the Department of Justice, and to White House consultant E. Howard Hunt."