

Ex-Aide Pleads Guilty

CIA Allegation Also Admitted By Magruder

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

John Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of President Nixon's reelection campaign, pleaded guilty yesterday to help plan the Watergate bugging of Democratic headquarters and then conspire to cover up the ensuing scandal.

Released on his own recognizance, he will not have to try his hand at the courtroom circuit before he is sentenced a step that he is said to want to avoid.

"The main reason I have no doubts about my guilt is that the CIA has admitted its role in the Watergate bugging," Magruder said.

Appearing in court just three hours after a turn from a European tour, Magruder admitted conspiring first in the illegal interception of wire communications and then in attempts to obstruct justice and defraud the United States by concealing the scope of the political espionage and those who participated in it.

At the hearing before U.S. District Court Judge John Sirica, Special Assistant Watergate Prosecutor James F. Neal formally charged for the first time that the wide-ranging conspiracy included attempts to use the Central Intelligence Agency in restricting the Justice Department's investigations.

Part of the conspiracy, Neal told the court in summarizing the one-count indictment against Magruder, called for certain co-conspirators to represent that the Central Intelligence Agency had an interest in limiting the investigation.

Magruder said he agreed with the accuracy of the charges. Judge Sirica rejected his plea after reading the one-time White House aide that he faces a maximum of

all ... years in prison and ...
speaking briefly with news-
men later, Magruder declined
to speculate on how much
time he will actually have to
spend behind bars. He said he
would accept whatever sen-
tence the judge determines is
appropriate.
See MAGRUDER, A5, Col. 1

8-17-73

MAGRUDER, From A1

"I feel as good as you can under the circumstances," he said. "I feel comfortable . . ."

Judge Sirica said he would withhold sentence until completion of any other trials in which Magruder's testimony is needed.

Neal suggested to newsmen that indictment of Magruder's "unnamed" co-conspirators are still a long way off. He indicated that Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox wants first to obtain President Nixon's tape recordings of his conversations with White House aides about the Watergate scandal.

Either with or without the tapes, Neal added, "I'm not prepared to go to trial now."

Magruder was the second to plead guilty in the cover-up, following high-ranking Nixon campaign strategist Frederick C. LaRue, who admitted his complicity before Judge Sirica on June 27.

Neal said he didn't know "whether we'll have any more or who they might be," then broke into a grin and added, without naming anyone, that "I can think of one I'd like to (come in)."

"If you're going to have a trial, you've got to have witnesses," the prosecutor said in denying that Magruder was getting off lightly. He emphasized that Magruder has been cooperating with government prosecutors since April. Even so, Neal said:

"He didn't try to escape punishment . . . The judge can give him up to five years. I don't consider that getting 'off easy.'"

Tanned from his trip to Europe, the boyish-faced Magruder returned from Germany in an apparent rush at 11:30 a.m. yesterday, 90 minutes late for an initially scheduled appearance before Judge Sirica. His lawyers won a postponement until 2:30 p.m. as a result.

Waiving grand jury indictment, Magruder admitted lying to the FBI last July about the Watergate break-in and perjuring himself before the Watergate grand jury on Aug. 10, 1972, and again on Sept. 12.

He said he also gave "false, deceptive and misleading testimony," Jan. 23 at the trial of G. Gordon Liddy, E. Howard Hunt Jr., and the five other men originally indicted in the June 17, 1972, burglary and

bugging at the Democratic Party's national headquarters at the Watergate here.

Since then, Magruder, in testimony before the Senate Watergate committee, has sworn that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell approved a \$250,000 version of Liddy's espionage plans, which included the bugging.

Mitchell has denied the charge as a "palpable, damnable lie."

Magruder also testified that former White House aide Gordon Strachan, who served as liaison between the White House and the Committee for the Re-election of the President, was kept informed of the bugging plans and was shown some of the results of the spywork. Magruder said he assumed that Strachan passed the information on to his boss, former White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman.

The charges against Magruder were submitted to Judge Sirica as portions of a single, long-run conspiracy that Neal said simply changed its illicit objectives from political espionage to obstruction of justice.

The information against Magruder, who quit a high-ranking post at the Commerce Department after publication of news stories linking him to the scandal, listed 15 overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy, including:

- Delivery on April 12, 1972, of \$65,000 in cash to convicted Watergate burglar James McCord "by one of the co-conspirators . . . for the purpose of purchasing equipment" for the bugging and break-in.

- Magruder's removal of summaries "of unlawfully intercepted telephone conversations" from a Washington office on June 19, 1972, two days after the initial arrests.

- Magruder's attendance at meetings in the offices of the Committee for the Re-election of the President both on Aug. 16, 1972, and on Sept. 12, 1972, where his testimony at upcoming grand jury appearances was discussed and "developed."

None of the particulars dealt with the pressures that past and present CIA officials have reported getting from top White House aides as part of an effort to involve that agency in the cover-up.

President Nixon said in his May 22 Watergate statement that he "specifically instructed" both Haldeman and

former presidential adviser John D. Ehrlichman to ensure that the FBI did not expose an "unrelated" CIA investigation or any covert "national security" activities of a special presidential investigating team called the Plumbers — a team that included both Liddy and Hunt.

Mr. Nixon maintained at the same time, however, that "it was certainly not my intent, nor my wish, that the investigation of the Watergate break-in or of related acts be impeded in any way." Haldeman and Ehrlichman have both contended that their contacts with the CIA were carried out in that vein.

In other action yesterday, William O. Bittman, a Watergate defense attorney who, testimony says, was paid thousands of dollars in a clandestine cash drop, withdrew as the lawyer for convicted conspirator Hunt.

Judge Sirica imposed no domestic travel restrictions on Magruder, since he is now running a marketing consultant agency, Metropolitan Research Service, with business that he said requires him to go to virtually every city in the country.

Prosecutor Neal, however, voiced some concern to reporters about Magruder's lecturing plans.

"He can talk about the Redskins," Neal suggested, but "I could not expect Mr. Magruder to talk about matters that are important to us . . . about Watergate."



United Press International

Jeb Magruder, left, and his attorney, James J. Bierbower, leave federal court after Magruder's guilty plea.