

A New Watergate Suit

Washington

The Association of State Democratic Chairmen sued the Nixon reelection campaign committee yesterday for \$10 million damages as a result of the Watergate bugging.

The action seemed designed in part to insure the state chairmen a voice in any settlement of the Watergate civil suit filed last year by the Democratic National Committee. The state chairmen's phone in the committee office was the only one successfully tapped in the break-in.

Democratic chairman

Robert S. Strauss, and Robert S. Vance, head of the state chairman's association, have frequently been at odds over party affairs.

In April, following talks between Strauss and former Nixon campaign chairman John N. Mitchell, the defendants reportedly made an informal offer of about \$500,000 to settle the committee's suit, which asks for \$3.2 million in damages, but the negotiations were broken off.

The latest suit was brought by the state chairmen's association, Vance, and seven 1972 state chair-

men who, according to the suit, were the most frequent callers to the association's phone in the Watergate offices.

Among them were Charles T. Manatt, former chairman of the California Democratic party.

Named defendants besides the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, were 18 persons, including the seven convicted Watergate conspirators, Mitchell and former White House aides John W. Dean III, H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and Gordon Strachan.

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