

Ex-Hughes Aide Hints at U.S. Bug

Las Vegas

John Meier, former "scientific adviser" to Howard Hughes, said yesterday the White House may have bugged his conversations with Donald Nixon before his indictment on charges of tax violations.

Meier, 39, was charged in a federal grand jury indictment August 9 with failing to pay taxes on about \$269,000 in 1968 and 1969, when he was involved with the acquisition of mining claims in Nevada for the Hughes Tool Co.

The former Hughes employee was arraigned in federal court before U.S. District Judge Roger Foley and unsuccessfully sought delay of proceedings until an investigation could be conducted into what defense attorneys said was possible "illegal electronic surveillance" by the government.

PLEA

Foley refused to grant a delay, entered a plea of innocent for Meier, and set trial for November 12.

"Several developments in the news media lead us to believe there was illegal electronic surveillance in this case," defense attorney Robert Wyshak argued. "Telephone conversations of the defendant may have

been monitored by the White House."

The Washington Post reported this week that President Nixon wiretapped his brother during his first term in office because of fears Donald's financial activities might embarrass the Nixon administration.

REPORT

The White House has neither confirmed nor denied the report.

Wyshak told reporters Meier had numerous conversations with Donald Nixon in previous years, but said he did not know what was discussed.

He described Meier and the President's brother as "associated" and said the men definitely conferred by telephone in 1969, one of the years referred to in the federal grand jury tax indictment against Meier.

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