

WXP^{ost} Ex-Watergate Guard Jobless, Hits 'Fears'

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By Cathie Wolhowe

Washington Post Staff Writer

Frank Wills, the security guard who discovered the Watergate break-in, is jobless and, he says, unable to persuade potential employers to hire him.

"I've looked all over but employers seem afraid to hire me," he said yesterday. "I don't know if they are being told not to hire me or if they are just afraid to hire me."

Wills said he has been collecting \$65 a week in unemployment checks for the past six weeks. He said that after quitting his Watergate job he took a post with Channin Realty of Washington as a security guard but was fired in late June because he took two days off to visit his home in South Carolina to help a writer assemble facts about his childhood. Officials at Channin Realty declined to comment.

Wills said he applied for a security guard job at Howard University. He said he was asked to fill out an application. But, he added, he was also told that he was unlikely to be hired because the Nixon Administration might cut off federal funds for the school if he worked there.

Lloyd H. Lacy, chief security officer for Howard, denied Wills' version of what happened at the school. "We've wondered what happened to him. I told him to put in an application and I never heard another word," Lacy said.

Wills also said he applied for a security job with the Metro subway agency but received a rejection letter explaining that

he "lacked the necessary experience and should be in a different field."

A Metro spokesman acknowledged that the agency had rejected Wills' application to become one of 15 guards at a Metro operations control station.

Wills said he wants to continue to work as a security guard, an occupation he has been in for nearly four years.

"I always wanted to be in security or some kind of undercover work, the FBI or the Secret Service," he said, "but I've got to go to school before I can do these things and I can't go to school unless I have a job."

Wills, who has 8 years of formal schooling plus Job Corps training said he left his job at the Watergate because he had no paid vacation and another guard with less seniority was promoted above him.

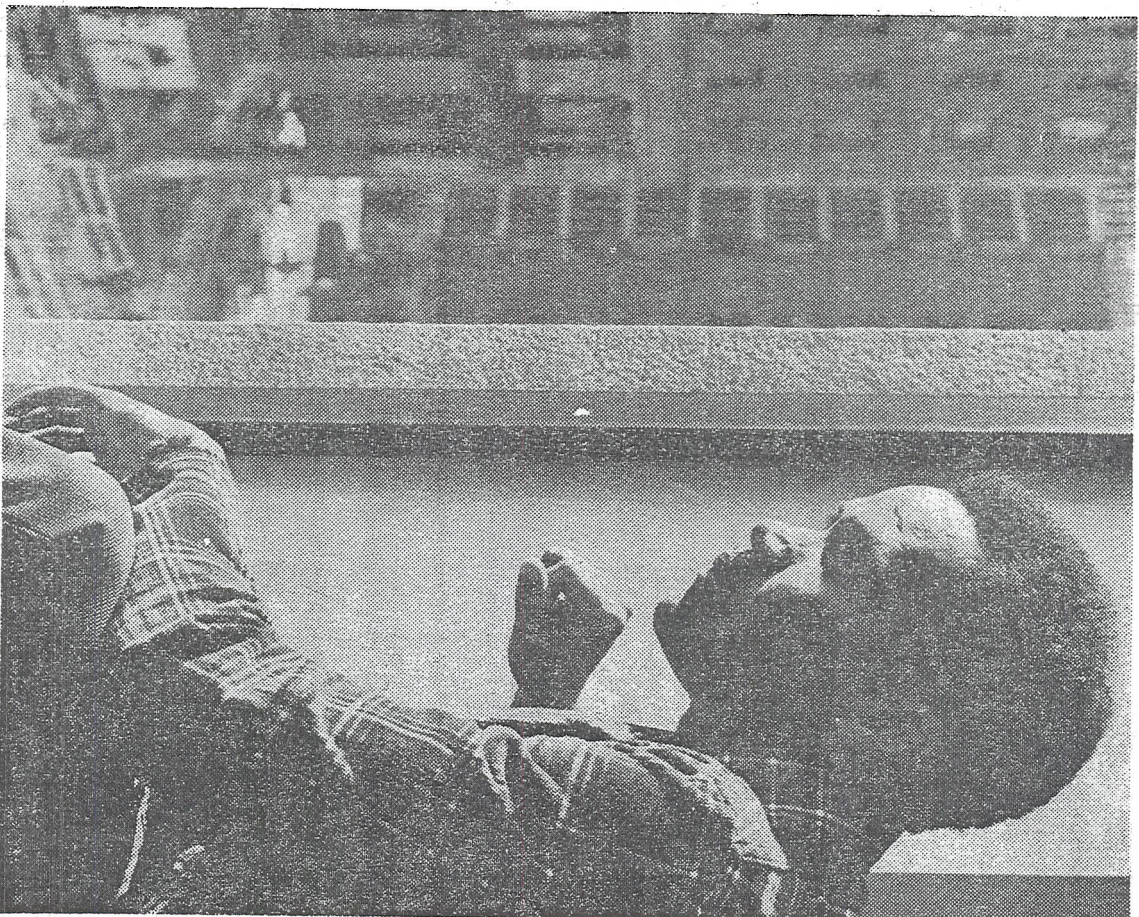
"I never missed more than one day of work and then I was sick," he said. "I did a good job, but they promoted this other fellow just because he was white," Wills said.

His former supervisor at the Watergate, Ira O'Neal, said he had been sorry to see Wills go. O'Neal acknowledged that another guard was promoted over Wills but denied that race was a factor.

"He was very good, very observant," O'Neal said of Wills. "He had curiosity. That's what you need to develop in this business. It's the reason he found what he did."

Despite O'Neal's praise, Wills says he also has been rejected for security guard

See WILLS, C6, Col. 1



FRANK WILLS, "Employers seem afraid to hire me."

By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

WILLS, From C1
jobs by hotels, hospitals and insurance companies.

On June 17, 1972, Wills was the guard who discovered a door lock in the Watergate held back with masking tape. He removed the tape and continued on his rounds. When he returned to the door 15 minutes later, he found the lock had been retaped. Then he called the police.

Five men, wearing rubber gloves and carrying lockpicks, tear-gas guns, sophisticated bugging and photographic devices and thousands of dollars in consecutively numbered \$100 bills, were found hiding in the national Democratic headquarters. These men were later linked to a widespread sabotage operation against the

Democrats by President Nixon's Committee to Re-Elect the President.

"Lots of people tell me I should have kept my mouth shut (and not called the police)," he said. "I'm beginning to think they were right, even though I know I would do the same thing today. If you're on a job to do something, you do it."

Wills learned how to cook in the Job Corps and has worked on an assembly line for Chrysler and Ford. But, he said, he prefers finding work as a security guard.

Although Wills has had difficulty finding employment, he is still remembered. Just last week, he was honored by the NAACP for his vigilance in discovering the break-in. On the same day, he was interviewed by a Boston television sta-