



Dita Beard answered Senate committee questions from her hospital bed in Colorado in March 1972
AP Wirephoto

ITT Lobbyist

Report of Bug in Dita Beard's Room

Washington

Staff members of two congressional committees are investigating the possibility that the Denver hospital room of ITT lobbyist Dita D. Beard was bugged—by an electronic device placed in a flower vase in March 1972.

Senate and House sources said they could not confirm that the bugging actually took place, but allowed that the information was so potentially explosive that it could not be ignored. The question of who ordered the purported bugging is totally unresolved, congressional sources said.

Congressional sources said that staff investigators of the special investigations subcommittee of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and the Senate select Watergate committee are looking into the matter.

The bug purportedly was placed in the flower vase in Mrs. Beard's room at the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital after she was whisked there early last year by Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy.

Purportedly attached to the vase, sources said, was a card reading: "Best wishes for a speedy recovery — the Communications Workers of America."

Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. has acknowledged that he wore a brown wig and visited Mrs. Beard in her hospital room in March 1972, to question her about the memo which the government's settlement she purportedly wrote linking an antitrust action against ITT with an offer of as much as \$400,000 by an ITT subsidiary to help finance the 1972 Republican National convention, then scheduled for San Diego.

Two staff members of the special investigations subcommittee met in Denver on Tuesday with Robert E. Wilkinson, a Denver area private detective and purportedly a key figure in the alleged bugging. The meeting reportedly lasted only about five minutes and did not get into the substance of the bugging allegation.

Wilkinson is currently under indictment on charges of illegal wiretapping and eavesdropping in two Colorado counties, and House sources said the investigators did not wish to question him, under those circumstances, without his lawyer being present.

Wilkinson and his lawyer told the Washington Post they could state "affirmatively" that Wilkinson had information relating to the alleged bugging attempt, but would not elaborate.

The alleged bugging came during a time when members of the Senate Judiciary Committee visited Mrs. Beard to question her while the committee was considering the nomination of Richard Kleindienst to be attorney general. A key issue in the hearing was the Justice Department's action in the ITT settlement.

The senators were forced to suspend their questioning of Mrs. Beard when she suffered a relapse during their interrogation.

House sources said yesterday that they have no idea if the alleged bugging was in any way related to the visit by Mrs. Beard by the senators.

Washington Post