

Segretti's Story Of 'Dirty Tricks'

Washington

Donald H. Segretti testified yesterday that he had reported regularly last year to President Nixon's appointments secretary about the "dirty tricks" he was playing on candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Segretti, who pleaded guilty this week to three misdemeanors related to illegal activities before the 1972 presidential primary in Florida, told the Senate Wa-

tergate committee that he had no reason to believe that Mr. Nixon knew of his work.

But the meek, pale 32-year-old lawyer said that he considered Dwight L. Chapin his "boss" throughout the time he was conducting his political sabotage operations.

Chapin left his position as White House appointments secretary in January to take an executive job with United Air Lines. He has refused to testify before the senate committee, claiming his constitutional privilege against self-incrimination.

In three interviews with agents of the FBI, however, Chapin maintained that Segretti operated on his own and that, after hiring him, he heard little from him.

But Segretti, while telling the committee of the various pranks and tricks he played with an eye toward creating confusion and divisiveness among the democratic candidates, testified that he received his general instructions from Chapin, and, "as a general matter of course," kept Chapin informed about what he was doing.

Segretti told the committee how, during the Florida

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

primary, he sent out a phony letter on the stationery of Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine that accused two rival candidates, Senator Hubert H. Hum-

phrey of Minnesota and Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, of sexual misconduct.

This letter, which, he said, cost him \$20 to have reproduced, led to Segretti's guilty plea on charges of distributing false campaign literature.

LETTER

After he had sent the letter, Segretti testified, Chapin told him something like, "for your \$20, you received \$10,000 to \$20,000 worth of free publicity, but be careful next time."

Segretti's testimony was cut short yesterday morning after the committee received a threat that a bomb had been placed in the senate caucus room. The police found no bomb, however, and Segretti concluded his testimony in the afternoon.

Throughout his five hours at the witness table, Segretti appeared apologetic and subdued, his hands folded on the gray felt tablecloth and his small frame hunched forward on his elbows.

"To the extent my activities have harmed other persons and the political process, I have the deepest regrets," he told the committee. But he complained that his "activities have been blown out of all proportion by the news media."

EXPERTS

Most political experts believe that Segretti's efforts during the primaries had no effect on their outcome, and Segretti, himself, agreed yesterday with the comment by Theodore H. White in "The Making of the President 1972" that his attempts at sabotage had "the weight of a feather."

Senior Democratic staff members on the committee said last summer that the committee's investigation of "dirty tricks" would prove to be more explosive than its Watergate inquiry and that it would be shown that Nixon aides had helped to engineer the Democratic presidential nomination of Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

Segretti was the committee's star witness during this

phase of the investigation, however, and his testimony, buy all accounts, produced no such conclusion.

Segretti began yesterday by telling the committee how he had been contacted in 1971 by Chapin and another White House aide, Gordon C. Strachan, both of whom were classmates of his at the University of Southern

California in the early 1960s.

Upon his discharge from the army in September, 1971, Segretti said, he met again with Chapin and Strachan and went to work in the Nixon campaign.

SALARY

During the next six months, he said, he was paid about \$45,000 in salary and expenses by Herbert W. Kalmbach, then Mr. Nixon's personal attorney. Kalmbach did not know the nature of his work, Segretti said.

He told the committee that he would not have taken the job if he had not thought that he was working for the White House and had he not been paid such a substantial amount.

He accepted the position, he testified, because of a "combination of factors: my lack of any concrete career plans, my friendship and respect for Chapin and Strachan, my belief in the reelection of President Nixon, the opportunity of working for the White House and the change of pace from my army duties."

From September until June, he testified, he traveled the country, going into states where there were important primary elections and, often "over a couple of beers," thinking up ways to sow divisiveness among the Democratic presidential candidates.

ACTIONS

Among his actions were the following:

- He distributed posters

during the Florida primary reading "Help Muskie in busing more children now," signed by a fictitious group called the "Mothers Backing Muskie Committee."

- He placed an advertisement in a college newspaper stating, "Wanted. Sincere gentleman seeks running mate. White preferred but natural sense of rhythm no obstacle. Contact E. Muskie."

- He also placed another ad in a Miami newspaper widely read by Jews that said, "Sen. Muskie, would you accept a Jewish running mate." These two advertisements referred to an earlier Muskie comment that the time was not right for a black vice presidential candidate.

- At the instructions of Chapin, he arranged for pickets during a speech by Muskie in California in late 1971 and hired a private detective to trail the Maine senator.

- He hired two accomplices, one of whom broke into the Muskie headquarters in Florida and planted a stink bomb.

Segretti said that he was not involved in the burglary of the Democratic national headquarters at the Watergate complex in June, 1972, and that he had stopped his activities thereafter. He began seeking legal advice from John W. Dean III, then the White House counsel.

Over the next few months, Segretti said, he met several times with Dean, who advised him to tell the truth to FBI investigators but not to volunteer information.

New York Times



AP Wirephoto
WITNESS DONALD H. SEGRETTI
A smile before testimony yesterday



UPI Telephoto
Dogs sniffed for bombs after a telephone threat forced the panel to recess