

Lawyers Try to Block Dita

By George Lardner Jr.

and Timothy S. Robinson

Washington Post Staff Writers

Former ITT lobbyist Dita Beard has been subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury here, but her lawyers are trying to block the appearance, apparently on the grounds that it might endanger her health.

The summons came to light after an unannounced hearing yesterday morning before chief U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica at which special Watergate prosecutors agreed to keep all pleadings in the case secret.

Court records already on file, however, confirmed that it was Mrs. Beard who had been subpoenaed to testify here Friday.

Appearing ostensibly on behalf of anonymous client, one of Mrs. Beard's lawyers, Robert Harris of Leesburg, Va., asked that the subpoena be quashed. At the least, he asked Judge Sirica to name a government psychiatrist to examine her before the grand jury appearance.

Still on the ITT payroll, Mrs. Beard has been living in Denver since March, 1972, shortly after publication of the "Dita Beard memo" linking the administration's settlement of three antitrust suits against ITT to an IT subsidiary.

ary's offer of \$400,000 to help finance the 1972 Republican National Convention.

First secluded at a Denver hospital for treatment of a heart ailment, Mrs. Beard was visited shortly after her arrival there by Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. Hunt, who traveled to Denver under an alias and who wore a wig during his interview with Mrs. Beard, had been dispatched to talk to her about the memo by then-White House special counsel Charles W. Colson.

She later claimed that the document was a "forgery" and "a hoax."

In an interview published

yesterday in The Denver Post, Mrs. Beard said she hopes to avoid the grand jury appearance for medical reasons. She was quoted as saying that doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., recommended after intensive tests several weeks ago that she avoid "stressful appearances."

"The clinic found that under no circumstances can the health or mentality of this woman cope any longer with the horrors hanging over her head," Mrs. Beard told The Denver Post.

She said special Watergate prosecutors were initially planning to accept that assessment, but then went ahead

and subpoenaed her anyway.

A task force under Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox has been investigating the Justice Department's controversial antitrust settlement with ITT. In a March 30, 1972, memo made public this summer, Colson warned of other internal memos that could "directly involve" President Nixon in favorable settlement of the ITT antitrust suits and "lay this case on the President's doorstep."

Cox has reportedly since obtained those other memos from the White House.

Another of Mrs. Beard's attorneys, Harold E. White of Van Nuys, Calif., disclaimed

Beard's

Grand Jury Appearance

any knowledge of just what the Watergate prosecutors want to question her about. She has reportedly just returned from a trip to Europe for ITT.

"It looks like a fishing expedition, but that's not unusual in Washington these days," White said in a brief telephone interview with The Washington Post. "We're not a target (of the inquiry) to my knowledge."

In addition to the ITT inquiry by Cox' office, congressional investigators are checking into reports that Mrs. Beard's hospital room was bugged at the behest of the White House. The bug was purportedly planted beneath

the false bottom of a vase of carnations delivered with a card reading: "Best wishes for a speedy recovery—the Com-

monwealth Workers of America."

According to The Denver Post interview, Mrs. Beard recalled the suspect flowers as roses. She said that while she was in the hospital a family friend in Denver reported getting a mysterious phone message from a caller, who said, "The roses are working."

"We tore the flowers apart, but we weren't experts," she was quoted as saying.

At yesterday's short court-

room hearing on Mrs. Beard's

grand jury subpoena, Sirica ordered all motions sealed and all proceedings held in secret at the request of her attorney, Harris. Speaking for Cox' office, Watergate Assistant Special Prosecutor Richard J. Davis said: "It is a grand jury matter, so we have no objection to holding the entire matter in camera."

It was the second time in as many weeks that Cox' office has agreed to the sealing of usually public court documents. Last week, Davis requested and obtained court-ordered secrecy for the letter setting out the government inducements leading up to guilty pleas by political saboteur Donald H. Segretti.



DITA BEARD
... health a question