

Krogh Enters Innocent Plea To False Testimony Charge

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former White House aide Egil (Bud) Krogh pleaded innocent yesterday to charges that he lied under oath about the burglary by the White House "plumbers" at the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell heard the plea, voiced plans for a speedy trial and released Krogh on his own recognizance.

Predicting vindication, Krogh, 34, said he was "confident of my innocence

and . . . looking forward to proving it."

Krogh, who headed the secret "plumbers" unit at the White House, has acknowledged responsibility for the break-in attempt, but contended that he was acting as "an officer of the United States" in defense of national security.

Conducted over the 1972 Labor Day weekend by a team headed by Watergate conspirators E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, the California burglary was aimed at securing psychiatric records on

Ellsberg, who had been indicted for leaking the "Pentagon Papers" to the press.

In an affidavit submitted at Ellsberg's trial last May, Krogh admitted ordering the break-in. Under questioning by government prosecutors in a deposition for the Watergate grand jury last year, however, he denied knowledge of Hunt's and Liddy's travels to California in connection with the incident.

He was indicted here last week on charges of making "false declarations." Krogh has also been indicted by a state grand jury in Los Angeles in connection with the break-in.

His lawyer, Stephen N. Shulman, suggested yesterday that the trial here be postponed since Krogh may be indicted here again on broader federal charges involving the burglary. Unless the federal indictments are consolidated, Shulman said, Krogh may have to stand trial three times instead of just twice.

Judge Gesell showed little inclination to wait and said he hoped to hold the trial in late November. He set Nov. 13 for a hearing on any pre-trial motions.

"I's not aware of any complexity in this case," Gesell said of the two-count false declarations indictment.

"The defenses are rather complicated," Shulman said.

"We'll determine whether there are defenses, Mr. Shulman," the judge replied.