

DEFENSE OFFICIAL DENIES PRESSURE

Says His Bid for F.B.I. Job
Was Not a 'Shakedown'
of Nixon Over Secrets

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 — A Pentagon investigator who was involved in the 1971 inquiry into military snooping in the White House denied today that he had attempted to "shake down" President Nixon last year in an effort to be named director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

W. Donald Stewart, 48 year old, now inspector general of the Defense Investigative Service, acknowledged in a telephone interview, however, that he twice approached White House officials about a bureau job last spring—at a time when the Nixon Administration was in dasarray over Watergate.

"I was looking for a job, no question about it," said Mr. Stewart, a 14-year veteran of F.B.I. work. "But I wasn't trying to put the muscle on them. I don't have a damn thing to hide and I didn't shake anybody down."

In turn, Mr. Stewart suggested that some officials in the White House or elsewhere might have acted improperly in their handling of the snooping investigation. He said he would be "tickled to death" to testify fully before a Congressional inquiry into the funneling of White House documents to the Pentagon.

Still in Pentagon Post

Jerry W. Friedheim, the Pentagon spokesman, confirmed today that Mr. Stewart was still on duty in his GS-15 investigating job. "The general feeling here is that he's a good investigator," Mr. Friedheim said. He added that Defense Department attorneys were studying the case in an effort to determine all the facts.

The known details of the incident, as confirmed by sources in the Senate, White House and Pentagon, are as follows:

In December, 1971, Mr. Stewart, then working as chief investigator for the office of Secretary of Defense Melvin N. Laird, was assigned to coordinate the White House "plumbers" inquiry into the publication of the secret India-Pakistan papers by Jack Anderson, the columnist.

In the course of that investigation, directed by David R.

Young Jr., co-leader of the plumbers, it was determined that two military men working as liaison to the National Security Council were forwarding, without authorization, copies of documents to the office of Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

One of the military men, Yeoman 1st Cl. Charles E. Radford, was also suspected of leaking the India-Pakistan papers and other documents to Mr. Anderson. Yeoman Radford has denied doing so.

Approach to Senator Baker

Mr. Young's inquiry, which was the last operation conducted by the plumbers, ended early in 1972 with Mr. Radford and his immediate superior, Rear Adm. Robert O. Welander, transferred to other duties. No charges were filed.

Sometime in the spring of 1973, after the first public disclosure of the plumbers involvement in the break-in of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist and the subsequent dismissal of charges against Dr. Ellsberg in the Pentagon papers case, Mr. Stewart approached an aide to Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., vice chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, and told him of the Radford investigation.

Mr. Stewart also disclosed that the inquiry had determined that many National Security Council documents had, in fact, been provided to Admiral Moorer.

It was this information that prompted Senator Baker, during the Watergate hearings, to ask some probing questions about the India-Pakistan investigation during the appearance last July of John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's former domestic aide who was in over-all supervision of the plumbers.

A private briefing was subsequently arranged for Senator Baker and Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., chairman of the Watergate committee, because of the White House's insistence that important "national security" aspects of the India-Pakistan investigation be covered.

Ervin Voices Wonder

It was at this briefing that the White House aides first told of what they depicted as a "blackmail" effort by a high Administration official who, they said, was threatening to make public classified information about the military snooping operation.

The two White House attorneys involved, Leonard Garment and J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., both emphasized the predicament faced by the President because of the alleged blackmail threat and urged the Senators to keep the information secret.

At the time, one source recalled, Senator Ervin expressed amazement over the White House's acquiescence and said, "Why didn't you go ahead and arrest these people?"

The White House eventually did refer Mr. Stewart's action

to the Justice Department, which concluded that he had apparently violated no laws.

In addition to an oral request made sometime in May of 1973—to be named director of the F.B.I., Mr. Stewart also acknowledged that he sent a letter to a White House aide late in June asking to be named deputy director of the F.B.I. The White House named Clarence M. Kelley as F.B.I. director on June 7.

Asked about the incident recently, some high White House officials disclosed that Mr. Stewart's initial request in May had been forwarded to Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., President Nixon's chief of staff. General Haig told Mr. Stewart "to go to hell" on the President's behalf, the official said, but did not order him dismissed.

Mr. Stewart was adamant today in disclaiming any intent at wrong-doing. "There's no story here," he said.

He disputed the White House's interpretation of his requests and letters and suggested that officials there, by depicting his efforts in harsh "blackmail" terms to the Senate Watergate committee, were attempting to buttress their plea of "national security" in connection with the plumbers activities.