

Magruder Says Mitchell Heard Of Plan to Bug McGovern in '72

NYTimes

By LESLEY OELSNER OCT 30 1974

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—The jury in the Watergate cover-up trial was told today that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell heard about—and did not object to—a plan to bug the hotel room that Senator George McGovern, then the leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for President, was to occupy at the 1972 Democratic National Convention at Miami Beach.

The testimony came from Jeb Stuart Magruder, once Mr. Mitchell's deputy at the Committee for the Re-Election of the President and now an inmate at a Federal prison. Mr. Magruder pleaded guilty in August, 1973, to a charge of conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Watergate cover-up case.

Mr. Magruder subsequently added that, as far as he knew,

no bugs were actually placed in Mr. McGovern's hotel room.

Mr. Magruder testified, in a firm and confident-sounding voice, that there was a "brief meeting" in early June, 1972, attended by Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Magruder and G. Gordon Liddy, one of the seven men who pleaded guilty or were convicted in the Watergate break-in case in January, 1973, and, according to testimony at the trial, the man who developed

Continued on Page 23, Column 1

INCOMPLETE

3, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1974

C

23

to Plan to Bug McGovern Hotel Room in '72

in the book, when he told the prosecutor that he had not received an offer of clemency.

The prosecutor—whom Mr. Hunt had described as a "curly haired, abrasive young man"—brought up the statement about perjury.

"Was that an attempt to misstate the facts?" Mr. Ben-Veniste asked.

It was, Mr. Hunt replied.

Mr. Ben-Veniste asked whether he himself had had anything to do with having the statement deleted from the book.

Mr. Hunt replied that he had not.

Among other developments during the direct examination of Mr. Hunt was his testimony that he had given his own admittedly second-hand version of the plan to bug the hotel

room that Mr. Mitchell was eventually to occupy during the Republican convention.

Mr. Hunt, who said he was repeating what Mr. Liddy had told him, testified that the Democratic official who was to have the room ahead of Mr. Mitchell was Lawrence F. O'Brien, then chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

On cross-examination today, Mr. Hundley asked Mr. Hunt whether he was aware that Mr. O'Brien's reservations were for the Fontainebleau Hotel, and Mr. Mitchell's for the Doral. Mr. Hunt said he had not known.

William S. Frates, an attorney for Mr. Ehrlichman, elicited from Mr. Hunt the admission that various other items in the memoirs, to be published by

G. P. Putnam's Sons of New York, were incorrect.

In his testimony, Mr. Hunt had not said anything to directly incriminate Mr. Mardian and Mr. Haldeman. So, Mr. Mardian's attorney, David G. Bress, merely asked Mr. Hunt whether he had known Mr. Mardian, getting a negative response. Mr. Haldeman's attorneys, John J. Wilson and Frank Strickler, asked no questions at all.

Mr. Hunt testified in a quiet, often sad-sounding voice. He slumped a bit in the witness chair, looked pale and weary.

Mr. Magruder, who came to court this afternoon with his wife, presented a sharp contrast. His face was ruddy and healthy looking; his voice was firm and his expression was confident.

Among the apparently new pieces of testimony he gave his recital of a remark that he said Mr. Dean had made at the end of a meeting on Feb. 4, 1972, in which Mr. Liddy was said to have presented Mr. Mitchell with the second, \$500,000 version of his plan for an intelligence-gathering operation.

According to Mr. Magruder, Mr. Dean said that "because of the sensitivity of the plan" and because it had just been discussed in the office of the Attorney General—the post Mr. Mitchell held at the time—Mr. Dean thought that there should be no more such meetings between Mr. Liddy and Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Magruder said Mr. Dean told him to be the go-between Mr. Liddy and Mr. Mitchell.