

Wiretapping Trial of Two Sons of H. L. Hunt Is

By MARTIN WALDRON

The telephone wiretapping trial of two sons of the late oil billionaire H. L. Hunt of Dallas was automatically postponed yesterday under an order of Judge Halbert O. Woodward in United States District Court in Lubbock, Tex.

The defendants, Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Herbert Hunt, are accused of hiring private detectives to record secretly telephone conversations of employes of the Hunt Oil Company in the fall and winter of 1969. Attorneys for the Hunts asked the Supreme Court earlier this year to suppress evidence against the two men, both of whom are wealthy oil men and real estate developers. of 1969.

Attorneys for the Hunts asked the Supreme Court earlier this year to suppress evidence against the two men, both of whom are wealthy oil men and real estate developers. Dallas, had set a trial date postpone the trial automatically taken some action on the motion to suppress the evidence by today.

The court took no action today, and in Alexandria, Va., one of the attorneys for the Hunts said it may be months before the Supreme Court makes a decision on whether to hear the pending motion.

In its 6th Year

The controversial case is now in its sixth year, and while many of the details are still clouded, there have been these recent developments:

¶ The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been checking allegations that highly placed political figures tried to keep the Hunt brothers from being indicted and tried.

¶ A Federal grand jury in Dallas has heard some testimony about these allegations and other aspects of the case but has not brought any charges.

¶ A lawyer for the Hunts has said that the Government itself made a "deal" not to charge the Hunts, and then broke the agreement. The attorney, Philip Hirschkop, said that the Government may have been trying to cover up the infiltration of the the Hunt Oil Company by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The case began in 1969 when two Houston private detectives J. J. Kelly and Patrick W. McCann 3d, were hired to put wiretaps on the telephones of five employes of H. L. Hunt.

Struggle for the Company

A former top assistant to H. L. Hunt, Paul M. Rothermel, has testified in an affidavit that family factions were engaged in a struggle to gain control of the Hunt Oil Company, the primary source of the Hunt oil fortune, which has been estimated to total as much as \$5-billion.

Mr. Rothermel said in his affidavit in 1971 that the wiretap case involved H. L. Hunt's two families.

Mr. Hunt and his first wife,

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Postponed When Supreme Court

the former Lyda Bunker, had six children, Nelson Bunker, W. Herbert, H. L. Jr., Lamar Margaret and Carolyn. Lamar Hunt is the owner of the Kansas City Chiefs football team and a promoter of professional tennis. He and the other children from this first marriage of their father all have substantial, oil-based fortunes.

Melvin T. Munn, the commentator of "Life Line," an anti-Communist-oriented radio program sponsored on hundreds of radio stations for a number of years by H. L. Hunt, said that in an interview in Chicago in the mid-nineteen-sixties, Mr. Hunt illustrated the size of the holdings of the children from this first marriage.

"When some reporter asked Mr. Hunt what he thought about Lamar losing a million dollars that year on his football team, Mr. Hunt said that was too bad, that at that rate, Lamar would be broke in 200 years," Mr. Munn said.

A Young Companion

While Lyda Bunker Hunt was ill with cancer in the nineteen-fifties, a young secretary from Shreveport, La., Ruth Ray, came to stay with her as a companion. Miss Ray and Mr. Hunt were married in 1957, two years after the first Mrs. Hunt died.

Miss Ray and Mr. Hunt had four children before they were formally married. Mr. Hunt later acknowledged the children as being legally his.

Mr. Rothermel, an attorney and a former F.B.I. agent, said in his 1971 statement that he had been using his influence with H. L. Hunt some years to make sure that the four children from this marriage were "well taken care of."

Mr. Rothermel said he had traveled with Mr. Hunt for a number of years as a combination confidante and bodyguard. He said that Mr. Hunt was so fond of him that he wrote a letter approving any transaction that Mr. Rothermel might make.

"The first six children were well taken care of in these trust funds," Mr. Rothermel said. "However, the other four children, from his second marriage, had only about \$3-million, all told, in trust funds."

Mr. Rothermel said that he persuaded Mr. Hunt to leave 51 per cent of the Hunt Oil Company stock to the second Mrs. Hunt and her children in his will.

H. L. Hunt died last November. The size of his estate and its distribution have not been made known publicly. Most of his wealth had been put into trust years ago.

Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Herbert Hunt have said

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Does Not Act on Case

that the wiretaps on the five employes of their father were installed to try to uncover evidence that his employes were stealing money from him and from his companies.

In an interview with Newsweek magazine last month, Nelson Bunker Hunter said that as much as \$50-million may have been embezzled from the Hunt companies.

The Government said in an indictment that the telephone wire taps were installed on Nov. 20, 1969, on the telephones of Mr. Rothermel, a woman who was H. L. Hunt's private secretary, a man who was vice president of several of the Hunt oil companies, John W. Curington, who was a former assistant to Mr. Hunt, and John H. Brown, who was former sales manager of the H.L.H. Food Products Division

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| <p>of the Hunt Oil Company.</p> <p>Although the family business had amassed a huge fortune in oil, Mr. Hunt was interested also in food processing and the manufacture and sale of cosmetics and patent medicines.</p> <p>A Bright Red Car</p> <p>On Jan. 10, 1970, after telephone taps had been in place about seven weeks, Mr. Rothermel's wife, a psychiatric nurse, asked the police to investigate a bright red car that she said had been parked near her home for several days.</p> <p>When a police cruiser came to the scene, the driver of the red car sped away in it, going through a stop sign. The police chased the car and arrested the driver, Mr. McCann, who identified himself as a private detective.</p> <p>In the trunk of his car, the</p> | <p>police said, were \$40,000 worth of recording and bugging equipment, including several reels of tape. The police played the tapes and then called the F.B.I.</p> <p>Mr. Kelly and his associate, Mr. McCann, both of whom refused to tell police who had hired them, were not indicted until May, 1971, after a 15-month-long investigation. They were tried in August, 1971, convicted and sentenced to three years in Federal prison.</p> <p>Mr. Kelly later testified that he and Mr. McCann had been offered \$1,250 a month each to keep quiet.</p> <p>Granted Immunity</p> <p>In the summer of 1972, a Federal district judge granted them immunity from further prosecution in the case and ordered the two private detectives to tell a grand jury who had hired them.</p> | <p>On Feb. 8, 1973, the Federal grand jury in Dallas indicted Nelson Bunker Hunt, William Herbert Hunt and two other men—Clyde Wilson, a private security consultant from Houston, and Carl M. Watson, a former telephone company employe.</p> <p>Nelson Bunker Hunt is 49 years old and lives in Dallas. In addition to his own holdings, he has real estate and cattle interests.</p> <p>In April, 1971, he held what was believed to be the world's largest sale of Charolais cattle on his ranch north of Dallas. He was reported to have sold 1,700 head of pure bred brood cows at prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000.</p> <p>He has also bred race horses.</p> <p>Nelson Bunker Hunt held oil leases in the Middle East and at one time was a partner with the giant British Pe-</p> |
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| <p>roleum Company in oil development in Libya.</p> <p>Libya nationalized these oil holdings in 1973, and last month Mr. Hunt sued seven major oil companies for \$90-million, alleging that their actions in Libya had deprived him of 90-million barrels of oil.</p> <p>Mr. Hunt has been known as a long-time political supporter of Gov. George C. Wallace Jr. of Alabama.</p> <p>William Herbert Hunt is 46 and is one of Texas's major real estate developers. He and Nelson Bunker Hunt have acquired several thousand acres of land north of Dallas at prices ranging up to \$40,000 an acre.</p> <p>In November, 1970, before Mr. Kelly and Mr. McCann were indicted on the wire tapping charges, the two Hunt brothers sued three of the per-</p> | <p>sons whose telephones had been tapped.</p> <p>The suit alleged that Mr. Rothermel, Mr. Curington and Mr. Brown had embezzled \$932,227 from one or more of the Hunt companies. Mrs. Rothermel countered with a suit of her own, asking for \$1.5-million because conversations between her and some psychiatric patients had been overheard or recorded illegally by the wire tappers.</p> <p>Neither Suit Tried</p> <p>Neither of these suits came to trial.</p> <p>The Alexandria, Va., attorney hired by the Hunts to defend them because he is an expert on wiretapping law, said the suits had been settled privately at a suggestion from the Justice Department.</p> <p>Mr. Hirschkop said that the Hunts had been led to believe</p> | <p>that if none of the suits was pushed, the Government would not indict the Hunts for hiring the wiretappers. L At the same time, the attorney said, the Hunts were told by top officials in the Justice Department that "in house" wiretapping to uncover embezzlers was not unlawful. L The "deal" broke down somewhere, Mr. Hirschkop said, and the two Hunts were indicted.</p> <p>The Hunt brothers had been scheduled to come to trial on May 14, 1973.</p> <p>Quintuplets in Switzerland</p> <p>BERNE, April 13 (Reuters)—A 30-year-old Swiss woman has given birth to quintuplets, Berne Maternity Hospital announced today. The babies, two boys and three girls, were removed from Mrs. Ruth Winterberger by Caesarian section.</p> |
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