

Recordings seem to verify charges

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Two tape recordings exist which apparently corroborate allegations against Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. of falsified vouchers and political slush funds, the Associated Press learned Thursday.

Sources told the AP that the tapes were produced by James Ashley, former Bell executive, and contain conversations he had with two top Bell executives.

Meanwhile, Bell officials denied allegations made by Ashley and the family of T.O. Gravitt, another Bell executive who committed suicide during a corporate investigation.

"In addition to confirming the bulk of what the late Gravitt wrote down, it (the tapes) discusses falsified vouchers, and methods al-

legedly used by the telephone company to slip money to political campaigns," sources told the Associated Press.

"For instance, there is one sequence about an architect for a new Bell building inflating his bill to the company with this prior understanding: the difference between what he had coming and what Bell paid him would go back to the company for political use.

"Another sequence had to do with a couple of law firms deliberately padding their bills in the same way for kickbacks to Bell and subsequent channeling into political activities," the source said.

In a statement from Southwestern Bell's St. Louis headquarters, company president Zane Barnes denied Bell has engaged in telephone wiretapping, has maintained political slush funds or that the

company is considered by politicians to be a major source of campaign money.

"One of the charges against the company is that Southwestern Bell keeps two sets of books in order to inflate its revenue needs and obtain favorable decisions in rate cases. This is simply not true," Barnes said.

The company has not disclosed why it fired Ashley but it does say

"many of the charges he has levelled against the company were the very ones for which he was dismissed." The company said Gravitt was involved in "some areas of questionable activities." These were not specified.

The Gravitt family, and Ashley, claim the two men became targets of Bell's probe because they refused to cooperate with what the suit said are unfair rate hike practices and other alleged misadventures.

Watergate jury hears more tapes

WASHINGTON (AP) — A deeply worried Richard M. Nixon was told in April 1973 that John W. Dean's disclosures might lead to his impeachment "on the ground that you committed a crime."

Nixon reacted by working out a story to protect himself.

"I have got to put the wagons up around the President," Nixon was heard telling top aide H.R. Haldeman on a tape recording of April 25, 1973, played Thursday for the Watergate cover-up trial jury.

Ironically, what seemed to concern Nixon most was that Dean might have taped a conversation a month earlier, on March 21, when they discussed the blackmail money demands being made on the White House by convicted Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt Jr.

"I just wonder if the son-of-a-bitch had a recorder on him," Nixon said. "I didn't notice any, but I wasn't looking."

The playing of four recordings, none made public previously, ended the government's use of tapes as its chief witness against Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, John N. Mitchell, Robert C. Mariani and Kenneth W. Parkinson—all charged with conspiring to cover up White House involvement in the Watergate affair.

Nixon is an unindicted co-conspirator in the case but President Ford's pardon makes him immune from criminal penalty.

Dean, who had been the President's counsel throughout the Watergate turmoil, had gone to prosecutors early in April to spill the whole story.

Part of that story was that Nixon had said in the March 21 conversation that there would be no problem in raising a million dollars to keep the Watergate defendants quiet.

In the first of three April 25 conversations played for the jury Ehrlichman told Nixon, "I think it's entirely conceivable that if Dean is totally out of control and if matters are not handled adroitly that you could get a resolution of impeachment in the Senate."

Nixon said: "That's right."

Ehrlichman continued: "On the ground that you committed a crime and that there is no other legal process available to the United States people other than impeachment. Otherwise, you have immunity from prosecution."

"Right," said Nixon.

Ehrlichman said, "You get down

to a point where you've got John Dean prancing in there and saying the President said this and the President said that . . . I think the only way that I know to make a judgment on this is for you to listen to your tapes and see what actually was said then, or maybe for Bob Haldeman to do it or somebody. See what was said in there and then analyze how big threat it is."

Ehrlichman has said all along that he did not know about the clandestine White House system that recorded everything said in Nixon's presence in his offices.

He has said he learned about it at the same time that Alexander Butterfield revealed the system's existence at the Senate Watergate hearings on July 16, 1973.

But Ehrlichman's lawyer said Thursday that his client had been told Nixon had taped some of the conversations with Dean only, including March 21.

Nixon sent Haldeman to listen to that tape, and the recording of Haldeman's report back to Nixon was played for the jury.

"Well, I say though that . . . we can get the money," Nixon said.

"Okay, but you didn't do it," Haldeman replied. "You're drawing Dean out on what he's talking about here."

Nixon: "You have to know exactly what he has."

Haldeman: "And the conclusion, in fact, was don't do it. You can't do it."

Nixon, with a sigh responded, "It's not a good story, best we can do."

Haldeman said, "You're trying to see how far it goes . . . you do that all the time but that doesn't mean that your statement is . . ." The rest of the words are unintelligible.

"I said a million dollars," Nixon responds. "With a million dollars . . . clemency . . . that's an incriminating thing. His word against the President's."

Together the President and Haldeman go over the Hunt demand again.

"You said, 'We could get the money, we can get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten but the question is who can handle it,'" Haldeman related.

Haldeman recalled for Nixon that he had said that Dean's major problem was to control Hunt "because he knows so much . . . you said you've got to keep the cap on the bottle that much . . . either or let it

all blow right now."

Nixon's response at that point was: "That's not a bad line for me at that point, is it? Political or is it gonna come down."

Haldeman: "I don't think so. You're smoking him out on what he thinks the alternatives are."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Haldeman: "You're pumping him."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Haldeman told Nixon that he had told Dean that he was not sure clemency could be delivered for the Watergate defendants, particularly not before the 1974 elections.

"Dean said it may further involve you," Haldeman told Nixon and added, "You said yes and it would be—then it's wrong."

Nixon responded: "That's not bad."

Haldeman again stresses that the clemency never happened and that Nixon would not be vulnerable on the point and Haldeman suggests that the Nixon statement, "We've got to keep the cap on the bottle, we've got to take care of Hunt" would raise many questions.

"You may be pushing him there to find out whether he has set up a system of delivery and all that, which he didn't," Haldeman warns.

And Nixon responds, "What I'm really setting up there, putting the best light on a bad situation, is basic, basically, I'm saying 'well, get the money but we should try to cut it off and so forth but how do you do it.'"

By then Nixon has come around to the idea that the cover story should be that he was trying to draw out Dean, "trying to get the facts, the truth."

Closed session set for Council meeting

College Station City Attorney Neeley Lewis will make a recommendation to the City Council concerning pending litigation from the owners of the Monaco Apartments in executive session at Monday night's council meeting.

The Monaco owners have filed notice of intent to sue the city following flooding of the apartments in September. The flooding was caused by heavy rains and the resulting overflow of Wolf Pen Creek.

Individuals must file notice of intent to sue a city 60 days before the suit can be initiated.

In other business, the council will hear a report of the status of the city under the Community Development Act.

City Planner Bill Koehler made similar presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission Monday. Koehler said the city will receive maximum of \$71,000 next year under the act.

The council will hear a report from a committee set up to develop a brochure on the city. Funds for the brochure will come from the hotel-motel tax revenue.

The council will set a date for their regular December meeting. The usual date falls during the Christmas holidays.

The council will also consider making Nov. 29 a holiday for city employees because it is the day after Thanksgiving.

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