

Dean Says Nixon Ordered Aides to Burgle Brookings

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Former White House counsel John Dean says there is tape-recorded proof that Richard Nixon personally ordered subordinates to burglarize Washington's Brookings Institution in 1971.

In an interview in the March issue of Book Digest, Dean also said he is convinced the June, 1972, Watergate burglary itself was "set up at his [Nixon's] general request."

During the Watergate investigations, Dean and others testified that the so-called "White House plumbers" burglary unit had been ordered to break into the Brookings Institution, a professional research organization, in search of evidence on the Pentagon Papers leak.

In the magazine interview, Dean declared he now knows the Brookings burglary project—never carried out—"came directly from the President." He was asked why he thought so.

"The way I learned about it was curious," he said. "I was in prison and they were interviewing me about other cases.

"Suddenly one of the investigators said, 'You know, I was listening to a [White House] tape on an unrelated case, and you'll be interested to know that I heard the President give orders to rifle the files at Brookings, to get in there and get that stuff out.'"

Dean did not identify the investigator or the tape recording further or say what use Watergate investigators made of it. No such Nixon comments appeared among voluminous tape transcripts released to the public.