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Was Jaworski a Texas operator, too?

Leon Jaworski, in his recent book, *The Right and the Power*, tells us how Alexander Haig tried to influence him. When Jaworski arrived in Wash-

ington to take up his duties as special prosecutor, Haig told him he was a possibility for the Supreme Court. Jaworski did not tell Haig this was out of line. He just smiled. What if Nixon avoided impeachment, indictment, or resignation after all? Nothing Jaworski said to Haig would preclude that Supreme Court appointment. Texas operators do not close their options.

Jaworski expects us to disapprove of Haig's attempts to influence him. But he admits to saying things that could have influenced his subordinate in favor of a friend. The friend is John Connally — who was, says Jaworski, not so much a "close friend" as a "friendly acquaintance."

Friendly enough to have appointed Jaworski to state office when John Connally was governor. But when Jaworski learned of Connally's alleged involvement in Nixon's dealings with the milk lobby, he knew there would be a conflict of interest if he prosecuted that particular item. He tells us himself that he felt honor-bound to dissociate himself completely from whatever investigation might be involved. But then he goes on to admit that he did not dissociate himself completely from the decisions or dis-

cussions of his subordinate, Henry Ruth. He intervened on at least three separate occasions in Connally's favor.

1. "I didn't ask Ruth to proceed with caution. It appeared Connally was a likely candidate for the Republican nomination for president, and I did not want him tarnished. . . ." The law should be no respecter of persons, not even a presidential candidate. Jaworski's office of special prosecutor existed precisely because the investigation of government officials was called for. Ruth knew this was a delicate matter. Why did Jaworski feel he had to caution him about a matter from which he claims he was honor-bound to dissociate himself completely?

2. "I was aware of plans to have Connally address the State Bar of Texas in San Antonio. I suggested to Ruth that if indictments involving Connally were contemplated, they should be deferred until the address had been 'made.' Once again: Why is Jaworski saving a man from embarrassment when he is supposed to be completely dissociated from the matter? He seems to be closer to Connally's affairs than Ruth, who needs to be informed and receive 'suggestions' on the timing of indictments as these might touch Connally's private life. . . ."

3. "Then it was announced that Connally's son was to be married, and that Connally was to be the best man. I told Ruth of this and he decided to withhold the indictment until the wedding was over." Again, a third time, Jaworski runs interference for his friend.

What was Ruth to make of all this? Certainly the three interventions Jaworski admits to constitute an indication of his will in the matter — at least as heavy a hint as Haig's talk of the Supreme Court to Jaworski himself.

Jaworski, as Ruth's superior, was in a position to reward or punish him. We know that his staff was overridden by Jaworski on other matters. Here, where he could not directly override, Jaworski certainly made his interest in the matter known. Why was he better informed about Connally's actions than the very people investigating him? Was he talking to Connally at the time? Is that how he dissociated himself from the matter completely?

Jaworski held a specially sensitive position, one that was created to overcome political ties and back-room influence. The standard for avoiding conflict of interest, or even the appearance of it, had to be upheld with special firmness in that position. Yet Jaworski did not observe even the nor-

mal rules that he himself spells out. The book is unwittingly self-accusatory; yet people as disparate as Mary McGroarty and James Jackson Kilpatrick

have greeted it ecstatically. Poor Nixon could not win, no matter what he did. And it seems Jaworski can't lose, even when it looks like he's trying to.