



DORIS HALESTAD



STANLEY THORNTON

HEIR-APPARENT GERALD WARREN & PRESS SECRETARY RONALD ZIEGLER

THE PRESS

New Man Up Front

John Dean's testimony last week pulverized whatever credibility White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler had retained concerning Watergate. Dean did not accuse Ziegler of conscious participation in the cover-up. Instead, his portrait of the press secretary's hapless entanglement in deception bordered on the farcical. As Dean told it, Ziegler's trusted colleagues and superiors regularly sent him into the cockpit of the White House briefing room armed with bogus information or none at all about Watergate. "Mr. Ziegler, on countless occasions," Dean testified, "asked me to brief him. I on several occasions asked Mr. [John] Ehrlichman if I could brief Ziegler. I was given very specific instructions that I was not to brief Ziegler."

If Ziegler was frequently uninformed, he was often well rehearsed (see box following page). But Dean's testimony also suggests that Ziegler's outward shows of arrogance sometimes masked simple ignorance of the truth. Perhaps the most damning instance of the facts being hidden from Ziegler was contained in Dean's account of Administration efforts to dodge a pending TIME article on the FBI's electronic surveillance of White House staffers and newsmen (see following story).

Such episodes returned to spook Ziegler. His relations with White House reporters were shaky even before Watergate. Now, with his added title of Assistant to the President, Ziegler is doing less of a routine briefing of newsmen. Last week Melvin Laird, the new White House domestic affairs adviser, told the Washington Post that Ziegler might be replaced altogether as principal spokesman. That would mean more exposure—and heat—for Deputy Press Secre-

tary Gerald Warren, 42, a genial sort who seems to have won the season's most dubious assignment. "This White House," says Victor Gold, formerly Spiro Agnew's press secretary, "could make Saul of Tarsus look like an idiot in two days, with the things they give their spokesmen to say."

A newsman since his college days at the University of Nebraska, Warren flew for the Navy during the Korean War, later signed on as a trainee with the San Diego *Union*, where he worked his way up to assistant managing editor. Just after Warren got that post in 1968, a mutual friend introduced him to Ziegler, who invited him to come to the White House as a deputy press secretary. Warren and his wife Euphemia moved into a comfortable house in Washington's fashionable Spring Valley section, began an active, gregarious social life; they even maintain personal friendships with members of the White House press corps. Warren had hoped to leave the White House after the 1972 campaign. Friends feel that he is now trapped in an unpalatable job by his own sense of duty. "I believe the President," Warren insists. "I have confidence in the President. I made a conscious decision to stay."

Room for Humor. Warren's briefing-room manner differs markedly from Ziegler's. His horn-rimmed glasses and pipe lend a thoughtful air to his comments; he pauses to consider questions before replying and accepts hostile queries without resorting to Ziegler's huffiness. Ziegler's programmed manner leaves little room for humor. Warren is more unbuttoned. Failing to hear a question from NBC Correspondent Richard Valeriani, he quipped: "Richard, will you speak in your on-the-air voice?" When he first began subbing for Ziegler, Warren would open with a

crack at his own expense: "I'm briefing today—anybody who wants to leave can go now."

Personally, Warren has won a measure of acceptance from White House reporters. "He's more articulate than Ron," UPI's Helen Thomas observes. "He knows how to speak the English language; he can put two words together to make sense."

But Warren has already tripped into the contradictions that plagued Ziegler; it was he who first denied John Dean's claim of 35 to 40 meetings with Nixon this spring, then admitted that the meetings had occurred. He added that the White House would not re-

lease the logs, later had to shift again to say that the material would be turned over to Senate investigators.

Like Ziegler, Warren insists that he has full access to White House information, as well as the President. But Dean's testimony last week suggests that Ziegler's easy access to members of the Nixon inner circle did not prevent him from being deceived and in turn deceiving. Despite his personal charm, Warren can help restore White House credibility only if he gets a lot of assistance—and truth—from the top.

"A Flat-Out Lie"

During his long week before the Ervin committee, John Dean made frequent reference to a TIME story last spring that provoked White House consternation. The background: On Feb. 22 Correspondent Sandy Smith filed an exclusive report stating that three years earlier Attorney General John Mitchell had authorized FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to place taps on the phones of a number of Washington newsmen. Two days later, Smith discovered that phones of a number of White House staffers had also been bugged, apparently in an Administration effort to trace leaks to reporters.

Smith learned that when L. Patrick Gray became acting director of the FBI after Hoover's death, he agreed to a White House order that the taps be continued; the bugging stopped only after the Supreme Court ruling in June 1972 that domestic wiretaps were illegal unless authorized by a court. When TIME asked for White House reaction to the story, Dean was in "a real quandary" and went to John Ehrlichman for advice. According to Dean, both he and Ehrlichman knew that the story was true, but Ehrlichman said, "Just flat out deny it." "Now," Dean added, "that was a flat-out lie." As a result, Ziegler told reporters: "The inquiry came to us from TIME magazine as to whether or not anyone here at the White House was

How to Rehearse for Deception

The problem before White House aides last October was how to respond to news reports that Dwight Chapin, then the President's appointments secretary, had hired Lawyer Donald Segretti and directed him in political sabotage. John Dean last week supplied the Ervin committee with a transcript of a "practice session" in which four officials coached Ronald Ziegler.

Impersonating both hostile reporters and Ziegler himself, John Ehrlichman, Chapin, Dean and Special Presidential Counsel Richard A. Moore alternately badgered Ziegler with expected questions and brainstormed lines of counterattack. Although the transcript does not always identify the speaker, most of the participants in the rehearsal urged that Ziegler discredit the stories as politically motivated. At one point, Chapin—the participant with the most at stake—struck the tone he thought Ziegler should take: "I am not going to dignify desperation politics."

Later, Ehrlichman (as Ziegler) challenged a roomful of imaginary reporters: "We just don't take as seriously as you do these campaign pranks. Some of you for your own purposes have blown these into something that is not there." The real Ziegler's cautious critique from the wings: "I don't think we can take on the press."

Another participant suggested a statement from the President saying, in part: "Dwight Chapin is one of the most able and most respected men on my staff. In my opinion, he made a mistake in encouraging pranks. However, this has occurred in my campaigns in the past and had no effect there. I am sure these pranks have had no effects here." That notion seemed to depict the President as a past victim of feckless capers. In any event, Ehrlichman hastily opposed the idea.

Ultimately, the group came up with three alternative responses. In the first, Ziegler was to say that the President

was not obliged to answer charges that were "unsubstantiated," "unsupported" and "political in character." A second response called for an admission that Chapin had hired Segretti but had no subsequent responsibility for Segretti's activities. Third, Ziegler could say that the President refused comment on all "allegations of campaign tactics."

The transcript breaks off without noting a final decision, but Ziegler's subsequent responses to reporters' questions on the Chapin-Segretti relationship are a matter of record. He reiterated Chapin's claim that such stories were "fundamentally inaccurate," added that "at no time has anyone in the White House or this Administration condoned such activities as spying on individuals ... or sabotaging campaigns in an illegal way." He also said that the President was concerned about stories "based on hearsay, innuendo, guilt by association." Chapin finally resigned to take a job with an airline—after Ziegler had denied that he was under pressure to leave. That denial, according to Dean, was also inaccurate.

aware, knew of, or at any time was involved in that [wiretapping], and the answer is a flat no, of course not." John Mitchell scoffed: "A pipe dream. Wiretaps on reporters were never authorized by me." TIME stuck by its information and printed the story—with Administration denials—in the issue of March 5.

Vanishing Editorial

London Times Editor William Rees-Mogg recently started a controversy by attacking U.S. press coverage of the Watergate investigation and arguing that British papers have more respect for the rights of suspects. British restraint, he argued, protected "universal principles" of justice. He had hardly returned to London from a U.S. visit when an uncomfortable reminder of that restraint was visited on his paper.

The Times issue of June 23 was rolling off the presses with a lead editorial titled "Poulson and Watergate"; the paper urged that a public tribunal of inquiry be established to investigate the affairs of Architect John Poulson and the widespread charges of kickbacks in British public housing construction. With 46,000 copies left to print, Times editors learned that Poulson had been arrested and charged with conspiracy after a police investigation. According to British law, the instant a civil or criminal matter is formally brought before a court, newsmen risk jail for contempt if they publish more about the case than is revealed in open court. The Times felt that it had to yank the editorial from the remaining press run. In its place appeared much white space and a note explaining that the article had been rendered "potentially prejudicial."

Poulson's arrest means that British papers will no longer refer to him in connection with the growing scandal—now being called the "British Watergate"—and it makes especially poignant one sentence in the self-censored editorial: "We should certainly try to avoid the situation in the United States in which there are ordinary prosecutions and a major public inquiry taking place simultaneously." The upshot is that discussion of the larger scandal has been quashed for now. If the same system existed in the U.S., the real story of Watergate might have remained buried while the pawns were being prosecuted.



LONDON TIMES PAGE AFTER DELETION
"Potentially prejudicial."

Baltimore Standoff

When Maryland started a \$50,000-a-week lottery in late May, Baltimore's two afternoon papers, the *Evening Sun* and Hearst's *News American*, stood to benefit by printing winning numbers daily. Then the promotion-minded *News American*, which had a small lead in readership but lagged far behind the *Sun* in ad linage, came up with a shrewd gimmick. It began running daily lists of 51 "losers," numbers not drawn in the state lottery but for which the *News* offers cash consolation prizes ranging from \$10 to \$100. Sundays, the loser of the week gets a \$500 jackpot.

For 2½ weeks, *Sun* executives watched a stampede of hopeful punters over to the *News*. After *News* sales rose an estimated 10% (20,000), the *Sun* struck back. The *Sunday Sun* printed a front-page box listing both official lottery winners and the *News American's* lucky losers; it instructed *Sun* readers holding numbers in the second list to visit *News American* offices and collect their winnings. Since then, the *Evening Sun* has continued to print each day its rival's list of losing numbers.

"Very unethical," huffed *News American* Publisher Mark F. Collins. "Plagiarism at its highest form." William F. Schmick Jr., president of the *Sun* papers, responded that the *News* prizes affected the commonweal and were therefore public information. "We think that people are entitled to know what they're worth," Schmick said. *News American* officials are muttering darkly about legal moves, but the *Sun's* counter-gambit has beefed up its circulation and given Baltimore losers double prominence.