

Post 6/4/92



JAMES W. McCORD:
FORMER CIA AGENT

These eight men were central figures in the scandal that brought down President Nixon.



They worked for him in the White House and in the reelection campaign.



H.R. HALDEMAN:
TOP STAFF AIDE



E. HOWARD HUNT:
NAMED IN NOTEBOOK

The Washington Post **FINAL**
FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 1974

Nixon Resigns

President Richard M. Nixon announced today that he would resign the office of the President of the United States. He said he was doing so because he had become convinced that he could not continue to serve his country as President. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office.

Ford Assumes Presidency Today

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THE NIXON YEARS



G. GORDON LIDDY:
CONCEIVED BREAK-IN



JOHN W. DEAN III:
ADVISED PRESIDENT



JOHN EHRLICHMAN:
SET UP CIA AID



JEB MAGRUDER:
NO. 2 AT CRP



JOHN N. MITCHELL:
HEADED CAMPAIGN

Era of Good Feeling

President Ford's inauguration is expected to mark the beginning of a new era of good feeling in the White House. He said he was doing so because he had become convinced that he could not continue to serve his country as President. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office.

A Solemn Change

The resignation of President Nixon marks a solemn change in the history of the United States. He said he was doing so because he had become convinced that he could not continue to serve his country as President. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office. He said he was resigning to save the country from the political and moral crisis that would result from his conviction and removal from office.

WATERGATE REVISITED

20 Years After the Break-In, the Story Continues to Unfold

By Karlyn Barker and Walter Pincus
Washington Post Staff Writers

Sgt. Paul Leeper and officers Carl Shoffler and John Barrett were headed toward Georgetown in their unmarked police car and had just passed under the Whitehurst Freeway at 1:52 a.m. when a dispatcher alerted them to "doors open" and a possible burglary underway at the posh Watergate complex.

A quick U-turn and a minute or two later, the three "casual clothes" District policemen pulled up in front of the hotel/office building near the Kennedy Center and walked into the lobby to look for the security guard who had reported trouble.

"We didn't jump out of the car and go running up there," Leeper said, recalling their initial ho-hum response in those early morning hours of June 17, 1972. "You get so many calls like that—burglary in progress—and 90 to 95 percent of them aren't anything."

But they saw the tape-covered door latches in the parking garage, the same kind of tampering on doors leading to the sixth floor headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, the disheveled files inside. Maybe something was going on after all. Then Barrett, gun drawn, spotted a moving figure and got the shock of his young life: "Five middle-aged guys stand up . . . wearing suits and ties and surgical gloves. And they've got a walkie-talkie . . . and tools and all this electrical stuff."

Thus began the scandal that became known by a single word: Watergate. From a routine police

summons and bungled burglary and bugging to the unprecedented resignation two years later of a discredited president facing almost certain impeachment, it mesmerized the nation's capital and ultimately the whole country.

Month by month, an appalled public confronted accounts of secret slush funds, hush money for the burglars, forged cables, wire-tapping and illegal entries by a secret "Plumbers" squad, enemies' lists, a secret tape-recording system in the White House and the flagrant and greedy abuse of presidential power.

By the time Richard M. Nixon waved goodbye to a red-eyed White House staff and boarded a helicopter for California exile on Aug. 9, 1974, his administration had disintegrated into disgrace. What seemed impossible, even unthinkable, had occurred: The president, sworn to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States, had been implicated with his top aides in an elaborate conspiracy to cover up criminal behavior and political sabotage.

Today, 20 years later, Watergate is contested history, constantly reexamined in books, on talk shows and in high school classrooms filled with students who were not yet born when the burglars got caught. What were they *really* doing there that night? Was it a scandal or merely politics as usual? Who was "Deep Throat" and will Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward ever tell?

Watergate even changed the language of politics. It seems a scandal isn't a scandal unless it ends in a "gate."

See WATERGATE, A21, Col. 1

■ *In Outlook, former Post executive editor Benjamin C. Bradlee recalls 26 intense months on Watergate trail, and Paul Taylor examines the scandal's legacy of corruption and redemption. Pages C1 and C3*



June 18, 1972, report of attempted bugging

WATERGATE, From A1

This is a retelling of the central story using publicly released FBI investigative files, oral histories, private memos, handwritten notes and other documents, most of them gleaned from the National Archives and not available when President Nixon resigned 18 years ago. This account includes voices from both well-known and little-known participants in the extraordinary crisis.

There are the two FBI agents first assigned to the case, the bookkeeper at the Committee for the Reelection of the President who risked her job to tell what she knew, the law clerk who holed up in a windowless jury room and listened aghast to the tapes of the president's conversations. There are the prosecutors, lawmakers and reporters who ferreted out a president's ugly secrets.

Nixon, the law and order president who promised to "Bring Us Together" and then clung to his second term insisting, "I'm not a crook," has spent the years since his resignation trying to rehabilitate himself. Now an author and global counselor, he wants to be remembered as the president who went to China, not the unindicted co-conspirator who might have gone to prison.

The tragic irony, especially for Nixon, is that Watergate's criminal and riskiest operations were not born of any great threat to his presidency. On the eve of the break-in, the polls showed him leading all likely

WATERGATE: THE BURGLARY THAT BROKE

'Parting the Veil' on

election rivals by 19 percentage points. "All we had to do was sit back and wait for the Democrats to nominate George McGovern [the eventual nominee in 1972]," a top Nixon reelection aide said later. "Unfortunately, we were doing a good deal more."

After some of the participants had reluctantly told their stories, in the courts and in televised congressional hearings that riveted the nation, more than 30 Nixon administration officials, campaign officers and financial contributors pleaded or were found guilty of breaking the law. Of these, 19 of the president's aides and hirelings went to jail, serving sentences of one to 52 months. Nixon himself received an unconditional presidential pardon a month after leaving office.

For historian Stanley Kutler, the lessons of Watergate have nothing to do with what he calls the "trivia" surrounding the break-in. That event merely "parted the veil" on Nixon's illegal activities, said Kutler, a University of Wisconsin professor and author of "The Wars of Watergate." The government survived a constitutional crisis, he said, "because people did their jobs."

For Judy Hoback, the bookkeeper who exposed a small piece of the scandal's puzzle to the FBI and later to reporters, it never seemed that easy. She was newly widowed with a baby daughter. She remembers how small she felt, how big the White House seemed. Now her daughter teaches

history and has urged Hoback to talk publicly about her role after all these years.

"A lot of people might say it was no big deal, that they're all crooks," said Hoback, who now lives in Florida. "But it was a BIG DEAL, and it did have some meaning. I feel it was good justice was done."

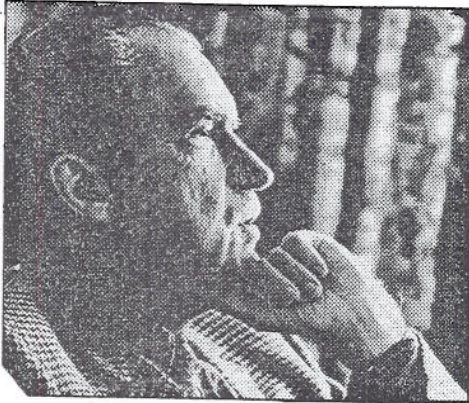
1 The Break-In And the Arrests

Frank Wills, an \$80-a-week security guard, saw the masking tape on the door latches in the Watergate parking garage while making his rounds about 12:30 a.m. He wasn't concerned. The 24-year-old Wills figured the maintenance crew had done it to keep the doors ajar and had forgotten to remove the tape. He stripped it off and went across the street to the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge restaurant for some takeout food.

About an hour later, Wills saw that the doors had been taped again. Rattled, he called the police.

A very nervous Wills escorted Leeper, Shoffler and Barrett to the taped doors. They shut off the elevators and moved up the stairwell to investigate.

Barrett bounded ahead, checking stair-



ASSOCIATED PRESS

'No one in the White House staff, no one in the administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident [the break-in].

— PRESIDENT NIXON
Aug. 22, 1972

Nixon at Camp David on Aug. 19, 1972

A PRESIDENCY

Top-Level Illegality

well doors as he ran up the stairs and shouting back to his partners. He found more tape on the sixth and eighth floors. The three men searched the eighth floor, found nothing and entered the sixth floor offices occupied by the Democratic National Committee.

A room to the right looked ransacked, with file drawers open and papers strewn about. A second room was in the same condition. Proceeding cautiously, they discovered a chair propping open a door to a large terrace overlooking Virginia Avenue.

Warily, Leeper and Shoffler went outside. Gun in hand, Shoffler crawled along an adjoining ledge to see if anyone was hiding. He noticed a man watching him intently from a balcony across the street at the Howard Johnson's.

Inside the DNC offices, Barrett moved carefully from room to room, flipping on lights as he went. Near the conference room, he crouched behind a glass and wood partition. "I was afraid to make a turn," he said, recalling his hesitation 20 years later. "It's dark, and Carl and Paul aren't here."

Suddenly, "I saw an arm hit the glass right next to my face. It scared the shit out of me."

Barrett remembers yelling something like "Back here!" to summon his partners and then shouted, "Police! Come out with your hands up!"

Not one, but five men stood up. In the tense moments that followed, Leeper

jumped up on a desk to cover the group. Barrett eyed one man who had a black overnight bag in one hand and a trench coat draped over an arm, obscuring his other hand. Barrett yelled at him to drop the bag and coat and raise his hands. The man didn't react. Barrett pointed his pistol directly at the man's chest. Another intruder said something in Spanish, and the man's hands flew up.

"I almost shot him," Barrett recalled.

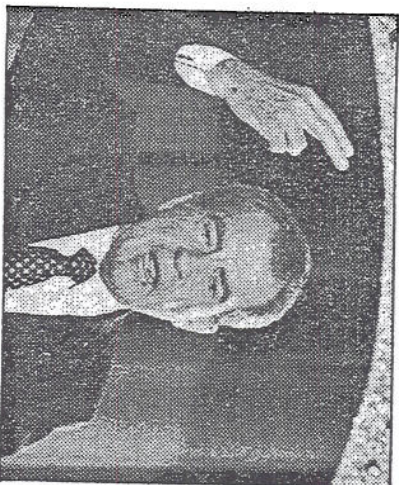
The size of the group made Leeper edgy too. Were there others, perhaps hiding under desks? He was also worried because they had only two pairs of handcuffs. Shoffler had left his in the car.

They ordered the five men to face the wall, hands up. They advised the suspects of their rights and patted them down, finding penlights, tiny tear-gas canisters and keys to Room 214 at the Watergate Hotel.

One of the suspects had a spiral notebook with a key taped to the outside cover. Twice, he tried to sneak his hand into his coat pocket to hide the key. Shoffler slammed him against the wall, then seized the notebook. The key fit the desk of Ida "Maxie" Wells, secretary to R. Spencer Oliver, executive director of the Association of State Democratic Chairmen.

At 2nd District police headquarters, then at 23rd and L streets NW, the suspects declined to contact lawyers, noting cryptically that the "appropriate people" had already

See WATERGATE, A22, Col. 1



ASSOCIATED PRESS

I don't give a [expletive deleted] what happens. I want you all to stonewall it, let them plead the Fifth Amendment, cover up or anything else if it'll save the plan. That's the whole point.

— PRESIDENT NIXON
March 22, 1973

Nixon stating refusal to resign in November 1973

WATERGATE: THE BURGLARY THAT BROKE A PRESIDENCY

PAGE 4 SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1974

The Washington Post FINAL

FBI Finds Nixon Aides Sabotaged Democrats

Pair Told to Enter Job They Asks to Leave

House Probed for Months

U.S. Denies PTT Role in 'Watergate'

Michigan House

Shared Recruits for Job

Oct. 10, 1972, report linking aides to break-in

The President's Men

Contain the Crisis

been notified. And they stuck to false, pre-arranged identities, giving police the names they had used to register at the hotel.

Except that two of them got mixed up.

"They gave me the same alias," said Barrett. "I said, 'Wait a minute, fellas, you've got to get your stories straight.' And they both giggled."

It took a few more hours to pierce through the phony names and establish their true identities: Bernard L. Barker, 53; Virgilio R. Gonzalez, 46; Eugenio Martinez, 50; Frank A. Sturgis, 47; and James W. McCord Jr., also 47.

But the names did not explain what the suspects were doing or why they were carrying an astonishing array of electronic and photographic equipment. Barker had a walkie-talkie and keys to a rental car. Gonzalez had lock-picking tools. McCord carried a wire cutter and screwdrivers and had pocketed four documents, including a letter to DNC Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien and application forms for college press credentials to cover the upcoming Democratic National Convention in Miami. All but McCord were carrying crisp, new \$100 bills.

Later that day, as the police sought frantically to find out more about the uncooperative suspects, a shocked 2nd District officer recognized the man calling himself Edward Martin: "That's Jim McCord," he told stunned colleagues. "He's the security chief at the Committee to Reelect the President."

2 Chasing Leads To 'W-House'

That first morning, a Saturday, Special Agent Angelo J. Lano was awakened at 8 a.m. by a call from FBI headquarters. There was a report that five international jewel thieves had been caught at the Watergate, where Lano had investigated previous burglaries.

By the time Lano arrived at the 2nd District police station, however, officers wanted him to look at what appeared to be the makings of a bomb. Lano rummaged around in the bag police had seized. "I grabbed a piece of tissue paper and pulled it out," he said in a recent interview, "and this little black device with wires fell into my hand. And I set it aside and I reached in and pulled out tissue paper and another black device fell out."

This was no bomb. The devices were something "you would use to monitor a conversation. Either intercept a conversation in a room, or a telephone bugging device." The FBI laboratory confirmed Lano's sus-

picious within 15 minutes.

A burglary, even at the DNC, was something the local cops could handle. But electronic eavesdropping put the crime squarely into federal jurisdiction. And so began the case that would absorb Lano, then 33 and a relatively junior agent, for the next five years, first with the office of the U.S. Attorney for the District and later for the special prosecutors appointed to take over the mushrooming probe.

Lano and his then-29-year-old partner, Daniel C. Mahan, have never discussed their Watergate work publicly. They consented to interviews now because the FBI made their investigation—all 16,000 pages—public several years ago under the Freedom of Information Act.

It also grates on them that the general public seems to believe that The Washington Post and reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein solved the Watergate case. Woodward and Bernstein's book on their reportage, "All the President's Men," later was made into a popular Hollywood film starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman.

According to Lano, much of Woodward and Bernstein's work reflected what the FBI already knew. "I resent that they have been perceived as the individuals who responded and solved the investigation," Lano said. "I feel the bureau . . . solved it, even though the public doesn't know that."

The FBI investigation and The Post's early reporting seemed to feed one other. The Post did publish information first turned up by the FBI, but the continuation of the investigation almost certainly depended on the political pressure resulting from the reporting of The Post and others.

Lano and his fellow FBI agents knew on that first Saturday, of course, that they had a bugging case on their hands. Apart from the electronic devices, the crime scene itself made that clear: The air conditioner panel was ajar in the DNC's conference room, the screws on a telephone jack had been loosened and some ceiling tiles had been removed.

What they learned about the suspects that day added to the mystery. Barker, Gonzalez and Martinez were Cuban Americans who lived in Miami, as did Sturgis, and all had been involved in anti-Castro activities tied to the CIA. Barker and McCord were former CIA agents. Lano wondered if they had stumbled upon a CIA operation.

That afternoon, D.C. police came across the first big break. A search of the men's

Watergate hotel room turned up \$3,500 in sequentially numbered \$100 bills in a dresser drawer. Martinez's attache case contained his pop-up address lister, Barker's small black address book, and a sealed, stamped envelope with a \$6.36 check made out to the Lakewood Country Club in Rockville. The check was drawn on the account of an E. Howard Hunt Jr.

Barker's book contained the initials "HH" above the notation "WH" and a telephone number. Martinez's address book listed the same number next to "Howard Hunt (White House)."

A quick trace showed that the phone number rang at a White House office.

Suddenly, the stakes had become a lot higher.

3 The Coverup Gets Underway

The FBI was moving fast, but so were the president's men.

Though they would deny it for months, top White House and campaign officials knew that first day that the "Cubans" caught at the Watergate were working for them. The news about McCord was a jolt, though. No one who worked for the Committee for the Reelection of the President (CRP) was supposed to go along on the actual break-in.

The president was enjoying a long weekend at the Florida White House in Key Biscayne. His major campaign aides were in Los Angeles, attending several political functions in advance of the Republican National Convention in August.

On Sunday, June 18, Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, spoke to deputy campaign director Jeb Stuart Magruder in California. Hurriedly, the two former advertising executives went over plans for containing the crisis.

The immediate problem was an Associated Press report that morning linking McCord to the reelection committee. They went over a press release that the CRP planned to release deploring the break-in. As they talked, Haldeman jotted down the intent of this message: "to get it as confused as poss.— & keep up idea of McCord's other emplmt."

In the first of the many bold lies that would characterize the scandal, the statement described McCord as a private consultant who had worked for the committee months ago. "This man and the other people were not operating on our behalf or our consent," said the statement, issued under

the name of CRP chairman John N. Mitchell, the former U.S. attorney general. "There is no place in our campaign or in the electoral process for this type of activity."

The evening after the break-in, Alexander P. Butterfield, an obscure White House aide, innocently mentioned to one FBI agent that Hunt had worked on "highly sensitive, confidential matters" at the White House several months earlier. As Haldeman now knew, Hunt had been a \$100-a-day consultant for Charles W. Colson, White House special counsel, and still had a desk and files in the Executive Office Building. Since April, Hunt had worked for the reelection.

But Haldeman and Magruder were most worried that the FBI might link the break-in to G. Gordon Liddy, the CRP finance counsel. Liddy, a swaggering former county prosecutor, had conceived of the break-in and recruited people to do it. And Liddy knew far too much about the administration's earlier illegal activities.

Over Labor Day weekend in 1971, using some of the same Cubans and a spy camera and fake ID's obtained from the CIA, Liddy and Hunt had supervised a break-in at the Los Angeles office of Lewis J. Fielding, psychiatrist to Daniel Ellsberg, leaker of the now-famous "Pentagon Papers" to The New York Times. The June 13, 1971, publication of this secret history of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War infuriated Nixon, even more so because it shared the front page with news of his daughter Tricia's White House wedding.

Ellsberg's embarrassing leak led to the birth of the "Plumbers," a special unit charged with stopping disclosures of politically sensitive information. Operating from Room 16 at the Executive Office Building, the unit soon focused attention on getting dirt on Ellsberg himself, who was facing trial on espionage and conspiracy charges.

Haldeman was determined to keep the Fielding break-in secret. John D. Ehrlichman, Nixon's domestic affairs adviser, was even more determined: He had authorized it and arranged the CIA assistance to Hunt and Liddy.

But that wasn't all they had to hide.

Nixon's lieutenants, determined to control and manipulate the political process, had ordered the wiretapping, tailing and infiltrating of prominent antiwar leaders, news reporters, even government officials, all in the name of national security. They also had set up an elaborate operation to spy on and undermine the primary election campaigns of Democratic candidates.

Worse, plans for these illegal activities—including the Watergate break-in itself—

had been approved by Mitchell while he was attorney general.

The prospect of any or all of this becoming public, especially during an election year, was terrifying to Nixon's men. Could the Watergate burglars be trusted to keep quiet? Liddy, while admitting that he had goofed by using McCord for the DNC job, assured Magruder that the burglars would never say anything to implicate him or others. He even offered to stand on a designated street corner and let someone shoot him if it would help matters.

On June 20, Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman met to plot a Watergate public relations offensive. Later that day, Nixon and Mitchell discussed the probe on the telephone. There could be no more slip-ups. The president's counsel, John W. Dean III, was ordered to keep track of the FBI.

Later that day, an upbeat Haldeman told Mitchell not to worry, according to Haldeman's notes of their phone conversation. The White House, he said, "may be able to keep [the investigation] under control."

4 Clues in Miami; A Delay in D.C.

At the Florida White House, Ron Ziegler, Nixon's press secretary, dismissed the break-in as "a third-rate burglary attempt." In Washington, the FBI and the newly assigned prosecution team weren't scoffing.

Prosecutors Earl J. Silbert, the principal assistant U.S. attorney in the D.C. office, fraud chief Seymour Glanzer and wiretap expert Donald Campbell knew they had an open-and-shut case against the five burglars. But they still did not know who had sent them there. McCord and the Cubans weren't talking—just as Liddy had promised. Neither was the mysterious Hunt.

But the FBI already knew that the Nixon campaign was more involved than it was admitting. On that first Saturday, the inves-

tigators managed to fill in some pieces of Hunt's background: He was a former White House consultant and, like Barker and McCord, an ex-CIA agent.

On Sunday, a desk clerk at the Howard Johnson's recognized McCord's picture in the newspaper and told the FBI he had rented a room at the motel. Tracing phone calls, the FBI found the lookout who Shofler had noticed on the balcony that night. His name was Alfred C. Baldwin III. Who had hired him?

By Thursday, June 22, agents had tracked most of the confiscated \$100 bills to Barker's account at a Miami bank. They learned that Barker had deposited five large checks in April: a \$25,000 cashier's check from Kenneth H. Dahlberg, a wealthy Minneapolis industrialist and a top Nixon campaign fund-raiser, and four checks totaling \$89,000 from Manuel Ogarrio, a Mexican attorney. Barker had then withdrawn \$10,000 in \$100 bills from this account.

Agents also learned that Barker had dropped off film at a Miami photo shop just a week before the break-in, ordering a "rush job" on 7 x 10 prints that included, as best a shop employee could recall, copies of documents on DNC letterhead, including some signed by DNC Chairman O'Brien.

The FBI was also hot on the trail of Donald H. Segretti, who had turned up in Hunt's telephone records. Segretti was mixed up in some kind of political dirty tricks that, at first blush, didn't appear illegal.

But as the agents got to the source of the burglars' money, the White House laid plans to throw the investigators off by encouraging the notion that the break-in was part of some mysterious CIA caper. The White House knew the FBI was theorizing possible CIA involvement in the break-in because acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray was regularly briefing White House counsel John Dean regularly about the investigation.

Nixon, in a June 23 tape-recorded conversation with Haldeman that was termed the "smoking gun" tape when it became public, approved a plan to have the CIA block the investigation by telling the FBI

that tracing the money could jeopardize a national security operation.

Specifically, the White House wanted to stop the bureau from interviewing Dahlberg and Ogarrio, whose checks had turned up in Barker's bank account. Both men had collected money from people who wanted to make secret contributions to Nixon's campaign and then hid the donations by writing their own checks to the CRP. Those checks—and here is where the Nixon people had knots in their stomachs—had been given to Liddy, who converted them to cash from Barker's account and returned the money to CRP's safe.

At the White House's request, Gray told his agents to hold off on interviews with Ogarrio and Dahlberg. But the idea of using the CIA to delay the inquiry failed when the CIA balked.

Meanwhile, the investigation was going in another direction anyway—back toward the White House. On June 28, following up on the seized address books, they located "George," a name listed in both. George turned out to be George Gordon Liddy. But Liddy too wouldn't talk.

Then on July 1, a woman in McCord's office at the CRP asked to see FBI agents. She wanted to see the agents alone, away from the prying eyes of the CRP attorneys who had sat in on her previous interview.

Did the FBI know, she asked during a rambling, seven-hour conversation in a Holiday Inn hotel room, that committee records had been destroyed on the day the burglars were caught?

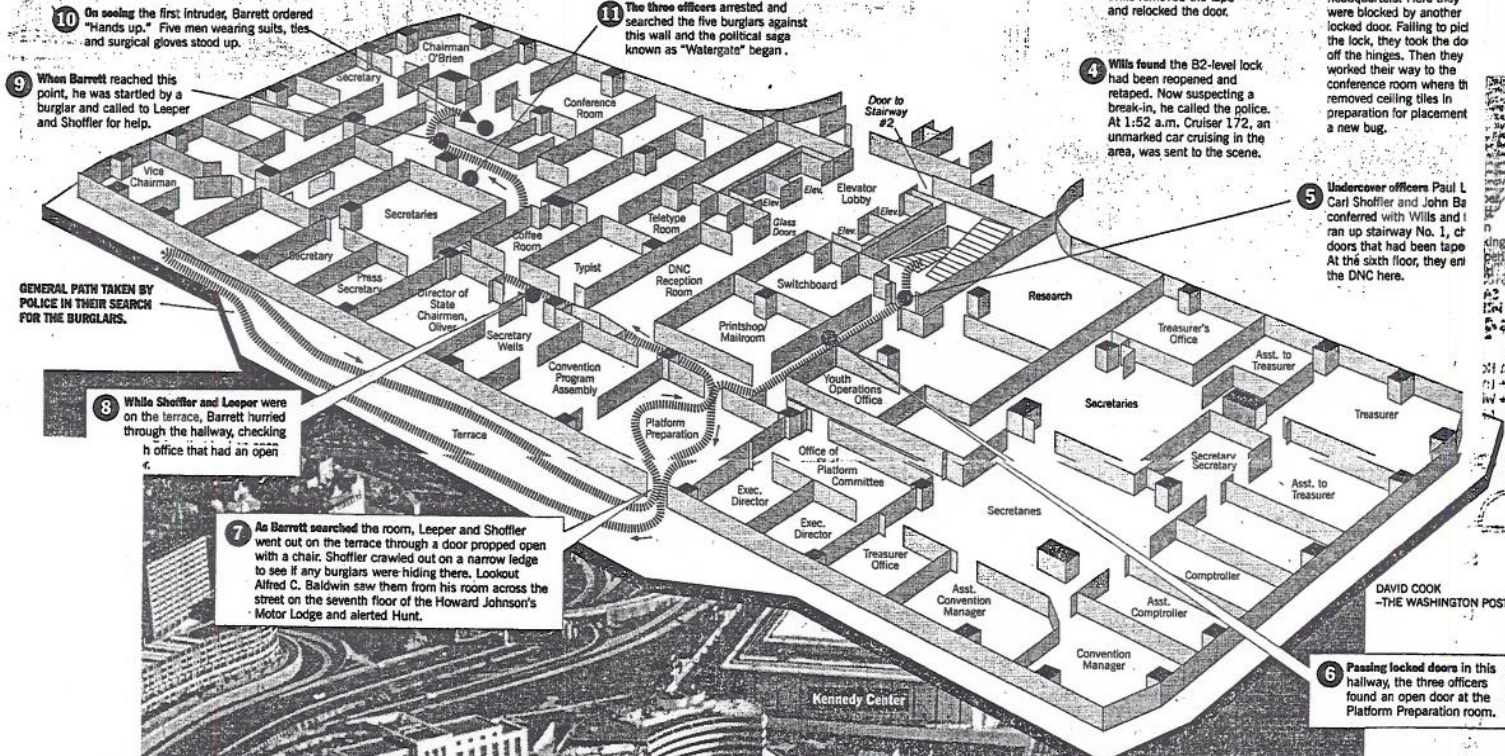
5 The Lookout Tells All

When the prosecutors and the FBI finally tracked down lookout Alfred Baldwin in Connecticut, he had one hell of a story to tell, including an account of how he had ac-

See WATERGATE, A23, Col. 1

SCENE OF THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN: POLICE TRACK THE INTRUDERS IN DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS

HOPING TO FIND INFORMATION that could damage the 1972 Democratic presidential campaign, a team of Nixon supporters — including G. Gordon Liddy, E. Howard Hunt Jr. and James W. McCord — planned two break-ins at the Democratic National Committee headquarters on the sixth floor of the Watergate Office Building. During a May 1972 break-in, they photographed documents in the Youth Operations Office and planted bugs in the telephones of top DNC officials Lawrence F. O'Brien and R. Spencer Oliver. The bugs in the O'Brien phone were too low-powered to be heard in the burglars' listening post across the street in Room 723 of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, so another bug-placing break-in was planned for June 16.



DAVID COOK
—THE WASHINGTON POST

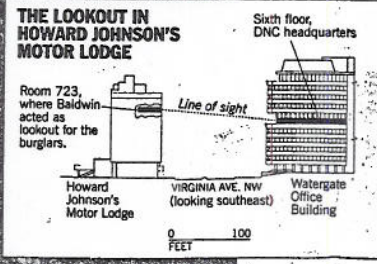
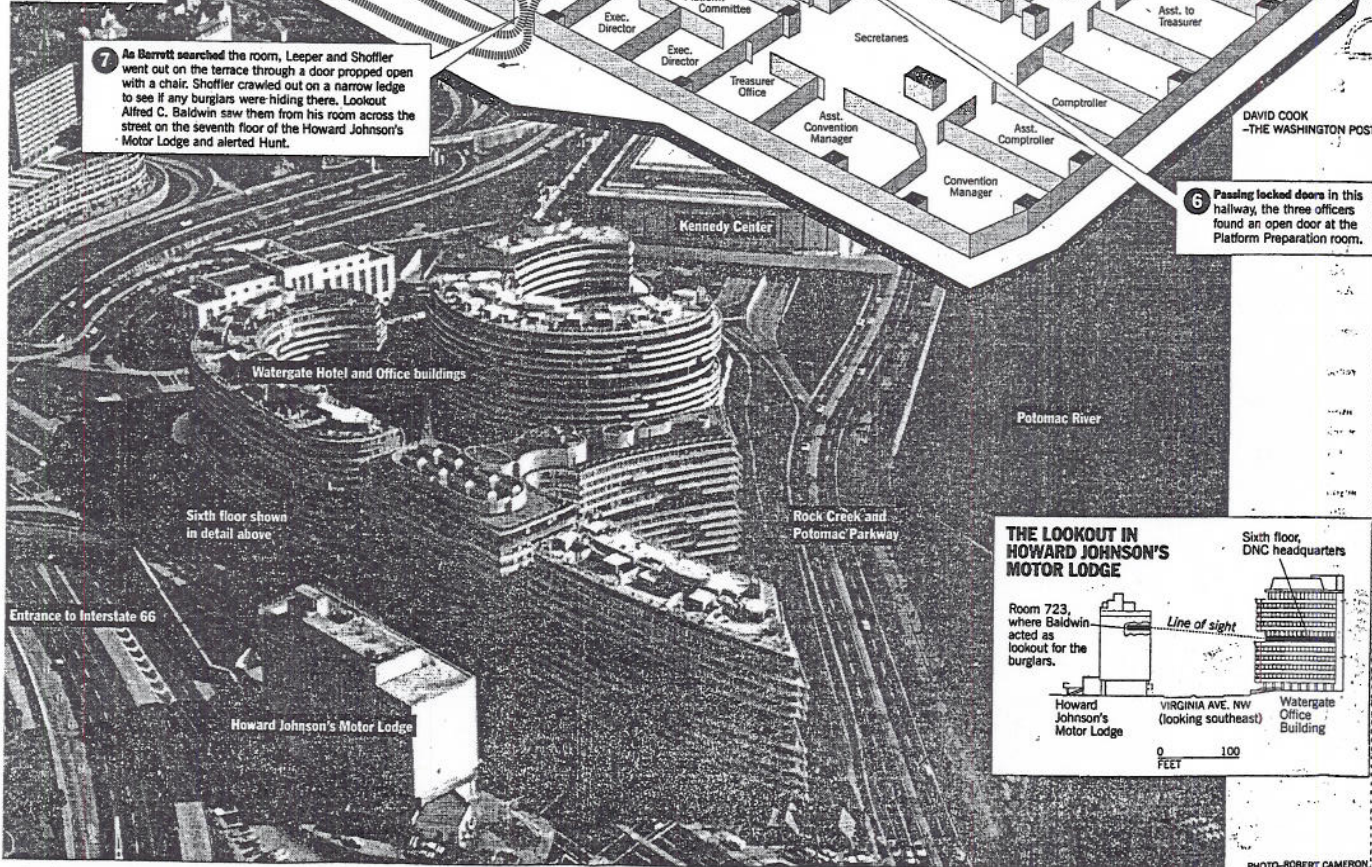


PHOTO-ROBERT CAMERON



BY DAVE BARAK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE BOOKKEEPER

Judy Hoback

An employee of the Committee for the Reelection of the President, Hoback exposed a small piece of the puzzle to the FBI and to two Washington Post reporters. She told investigators about the money disbursed to Liddy and about the destruction of reelection committee ledgers.

THE DEMOCRAT

R. Spencer Oliver

Now chief counsel to a House committee, Oliver, left, did not know at the time that Baldwin was eavesdropping on his phone conversations. "I was stunned and speechless," Oliver said.

THE LAW CLERK

Todd Christofferson

Judge Sirica's former law clerk Christofferson, right, remembers the day the two of them went into a jury room to listen to the once-secret tape recordings from the White House.



BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST



BY TOM ALLEN—THE WASHINGTON POST



BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST

THE PROSECUTOR

Samuel Dash

Now a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, Samuel Dash was chief counsel to the Senate Watergate committee, whose hearings in the summer of 1973 electrified television viewers with revelations on the inner workings of the White House and the reelection organization.

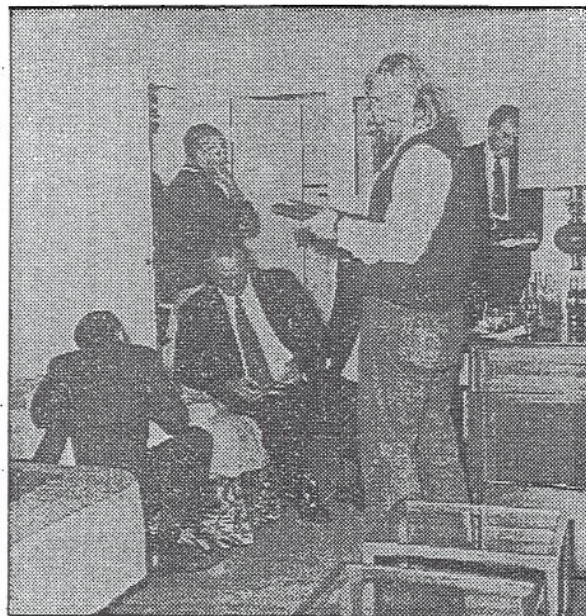


BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST

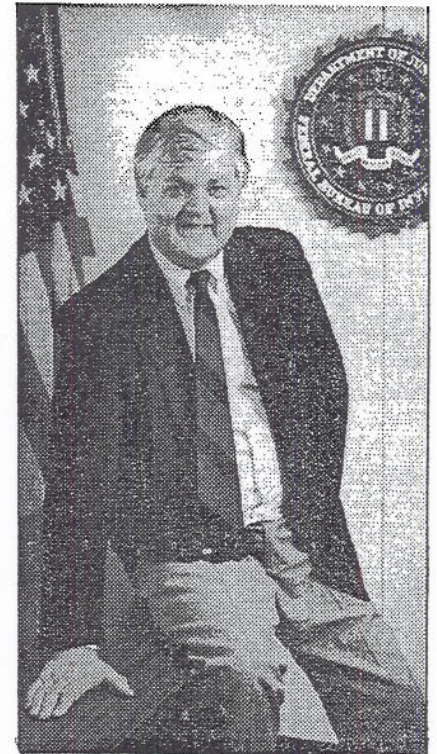
THE POLICE

**Paul Leeper,
John Barrett
and Carl Shoffler**

The officers who arrested the Watergate intruders pose on balcony of the Howard Johnson motel room in which the burglars' lookout was posted. Behind them at left is section of the Watergate Office Building where the Democratic Party had its headquarters. At right, Shoffler, foreground; Leeper, hand to face, and other officers search Watergate Hotel Room 214 on June 17, 1972.



METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT PHOTO



BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST

THE FBI AGENTS

**Daniel C. Mahan
and Angelo J. Lano**

Agent Mahan, above, now in Hartford, Conn.; Lano, below, no longer with the agency, at a church festival in Wilmington, Del. Lano says he resents "that [Woodward and Bernstein] have been perceived as the individuals who . . . solved the investigation. I feel the bureau . . . solved it, even though the public doesn't know that."



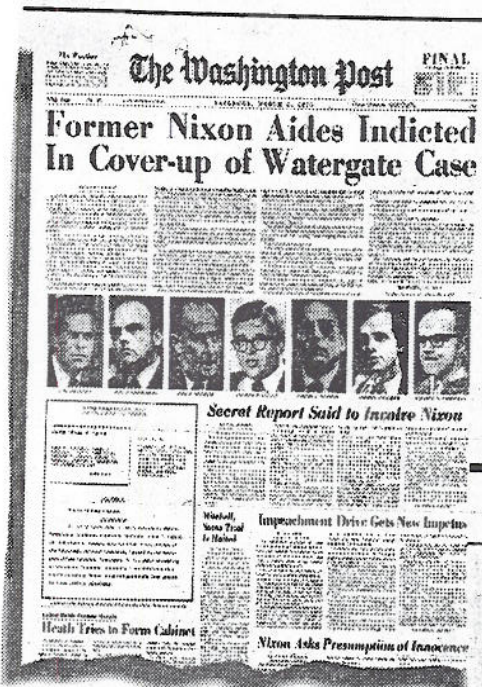
BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST



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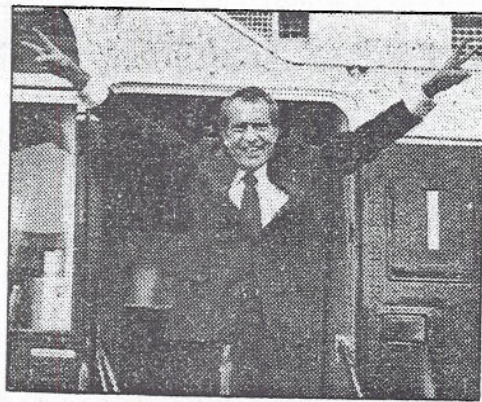
THE LOOKOUT

Alfred C. Baldwin III
Now an assistant state's attorney in Hartford, Conn., Baldwin, a former FBI agent and the burglars' lookout, revealed to investigators that the DNC offices had been broken into Memorial Day weekend to install listening devices.



March 2, 1972, report of indictment of aides

WATERGATE: THE BURGLARY THAT The Wall of



ASSOCIATED PRESS

'A lways give your best, never get discouraged, never be petty; always remember, others may hate you. Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them. And then you destroy yourself. ¶

— PRESIDENT NIXON
Aug. 9, 1974

Nixon leaving White House after resigning Aug. 9, 1974

BROKE A PRESIDENCY

Silence Begins to Crumble

accompanied Hunt on a reconnaissance visit to McGovern headquarters on Capitol Hill for a break-in attempt that never came off.

But the most astonishing information he gave them—the shocker that made so many other clues fit—was that the McCord/Miami crew had broken into the Democrats' Watergate offices on Memorial Day weekend. The group placed listening devices on O'Brien's and Oliver's phones and photographed DNC documents. Since then, Baldwin had lived in Room 723 of the Howard Johnson's, acting as chief eavesdropper. But the O'Brien "bug" never worked right. Replacing it was one objective of the return visit in June.

The day after the break-in, Baldwin fled to Connecticut and consulted with his lawyers. One was a well-connected Democrat named John Casidento. According to Baldwin, Casidento said the following day that he had been "in touch with very specific individuals on the Democratic side who are aware of what's happening, aware that you're a key player."

On June 20, three days after the break-in, the Democrats filed a \$1 million lawsuit and dropped hints publicly about how Watergate was much bigger than a bungled burglary. Few believed them.

Baldwin told the prosecutors that Nixon was obsessed with O'Brien, so much so that even after the break-in, Nixon ordered the IRS to audit O'Brien's taxes.

O'Brien felt that way too. "There were two targets throughout 1971, 1972: Larry O'Brien and the front-runner of the Democratic Party," O'Brien, now deceased, said in a 1987 oral history interview. "The objective was to destroy."

Spencer Oliver was a different matter. The Republicans wanted political intelligence on Oliver's efforts to encourage a stop-McGovern movement. The Nixon crowd saw McGovern as a weak opponent and had been using dirty tricks to undermine McGovern's rivals. Baldwin told prosecutors that the bug on Oliver's phone had worked well.

The night of the break-in, he saw three men drive up to the Watergate in a beat-up blue Ford, but they were not dressed like cops. Even when he spotted two men, one holding a gun, on the DNC terrace, he was not too concerned—until he spoke to Hunt.

"Are our people dressed casually or are they in suits?" he asked over his walkie-talkie. "Suits," replied Hunt tersely, who was holed up with Liddy in Room 214 at the Watergate. "Then we've got a problem," Baldwin warned.

Rushing into the room, Hunt ordered Baldwin to wipe it clean of fingerprints, take all the electronic equipment to McCord's home in Rockville, then get out of town.

"I'm living here for weeks and there's no way I know what all I touched," Baldwin remembers thinking. But all he said to Hunt was, "Does this mean we're not going to Miami?" Hunt, already at the door, just stared at him.

Baldwin's testimony gave prosecutors enough evidence to indict Hunt, Liddy, McCord and the four Miamians on Sept. 15, 1972. But when prosecutor Silbert and the others tried to push the investigation further, they hit a stone wall.

6 Trial Silence, Then a Surprise

There were plenty of hints that people as high up in the campaign as Mitchell and Haldeman controlled the funds used to pay the burglars. Hugh W. Sloan Jr., the CRP treasurer who had resigned a month after the break-in once he saw a coverup forming, told prosecutors that Mitchell and others had approved almost \$200,000 in payments to Liddy. Sloan also told them that Magruder had urged him to lie about how much money Liddy got.

Magruder denied it and said the money to Liddy was to set up an intelligence-gathering system to infiltrate and monitor radical

groups that might try to disrupt the GOP's convention. Other White House and campaign officials, including Mitchell, corroborated Magruder's story.

Mitchell, in particular, made a convincing witness.

"Mitchell's public image was cold and severe," Silbert recalled recently. "But in front of the grand jury he was warm and charming and seemed to be very cooperative."

At his subsequent trial, Mitchell was convicted of lying to the grand jury. In all, prosecutors later calculated, at least 20 witnesses either lied or withheld information from the grand jury.

Prosecutors did not know their job was being made tougher by their supervisor at the Justice Department, Henry E. Petersen. They were regularly briefing Petersen, who was passing along information to John Dean at the White House. Dean also was getting FBI interview reports from acting Director Gray and was briefing Magruder, Mitchell, Ehrlichman and Haldeman, enabling the coverup participants to keep abreast of the investigation.

Ehrlichman and Dean had even persuaded Gray to destroy political sabotage files from Hunt's Executive Office Building safe. They told him the material was not related to Watergate, a shame-faced Gray later revealed before announcing his resignation. The documents, which Gray burned in his fireplace, included a dossier Hunt had assembled on Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and a State Department cable Hunt had doctored to make it appear that President John F. Kennedy was involved in the 1963 assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

While Dean was doing his best to blunt the investigation, some witnesses felt the prosecutors were not pushing hard enough. One was Hoback, the CRP's bookkeeper.

She had made one brief appearance before the grand jury and was concerned that nobody asked her anything of consequence. "I was surprised at how fast I was in and out," Hoback said recently. "I waited out in the hallway longer than I was in there testifying."

Hoback, then 35, contacted the FBI even before her boss, Sloan, had. In repeated interviews, she told investigators about the money disbursed to Liddy and others and about the destruction of CRP ledgers. A CRP attorney later upbraided her for talking privately to the prosecutors.

"I remember getting about as red as an apple, I was so nervous," Hoback recalled.

When the first set of indictments went no higher than Hunt and Liddy, Hoback said she grew concerned and finally started talking to the persistent Woodward and Bernstein.

Hoback, never political, stayed on through the 1972 election. She never became a public figure, not even when the Watergate movie came out and she found herself portrayed by actress Jane Alexander—but never named.

Based on information from Hoback, Sloan and other sources, The Post published articles in the fall of 1972 alleging that the break-in was part of a coordinated campaign of political espionage carried out by top Nixon aides, and that a coverup was underway.

U.S. District Court Chief Judge John J. Sirica, the blunt-spoken, crusty jurist who assigned himself the Watergate case and was known for his tough sentencing, was interested in the higher ups too.

While Silbert, Campbell and Glanzer built their case around what they could prove—the break-in—"Maximum John" Sirica, then 68, showed little patience with this narrow focus. The jury, he said in December, a month before the trial began, "is going to want to know what did those men go into that headquarters for? Was their sole purpose political espionage? . . . Who hired them? Who started this?"

Silbert says he wanted those answers too, and that he thought the American people should have them *before* the November elections. Twenty years later, he is still uncomfortable discussing the "special pitch" made to McCord's lawyers about 10 days before the election.

"We offered him this great deal—the chance to plead to one count of conspiracy—if you come forward RIGHT NOW and tell us what you know," Silbert said.

Not then, not now, does he think this was proper for a criminal investigator.

"Do you ever as a prosecutor do anything because of an election?" he asks. "My answer is you don't and, frankly, we deviated from that."

Nothing came of the offer. There is a dispute about whether McCord's lawyers ever told him of the offer.

Nixon, whose personal lawyer Herbert W. Kalmbach had already started raising some \$250,000 in "hush money" for the

defendants, won reelection over McGovern in a landslide.

When the trial began in January 1973, Hunt pleaded guilty. Five days later, the Miami quartet did the same. All professed ignorance about anyone else's involvement. McCord and Liddy went to trial and were found guilty on all counts.

The wall of silence was intact. Try as he did, Sirica had not broken through.

While the defendants awaited sentencing, the Senate, prodded by media accounts of a possible coverup, prepared to hold full-blown investigative hearings. Then, out of nowhere, the first major crack appeared in the nine-month-long coverup.

It came on March 23, in Sirica's courtroom. The judge, reading from a letter McCord had sent in hopes of avoiding jail, delivered a bombshell. "There was political pressure applied to the defendants to plead guilty and remain silent," McCord had written. "Perjury occurred during the trial [and] others involved in the Watergate operation were not identified."

The stonewall was over. Now, the real investigation could begin.

7 Senate Hearings, White House Tapes

If March was bad for Nixon, April was worse. With McCord crumbling, with intensified pressure on the Nixon administration to appoint a special prosecutor, a "third-rate burglary" was now a first-rate political threat to the president.

Senate Watergate committee Chairman Sam Ervin (D-N.C.) was threatening to subpoena just about everyone, including CIA officials.

The word went out that McCord was "naming names," and two prominent ones soon surfaced: Magruder, which was no surprise, and Dean, which was. First Dean, then Magruder, approached prosecutors about a deal. They offered evidence against Halde- man, Ehrlichman and Mitchell. Magruder pleaded guilty to one felony count. Dean wanted immunity from prosecution, but Silbert was having none of it, not even when he gave prosecutors another motive for the coverup: the break-in by the "plumbers" at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office.

"Dean's the White House counsel, he's the orchestrator [of the coverup], the one who makes it work," Silbert said recently, explaining his hard line. "No way does that guy deserve a pass."

Having protected Nixon at his own peril, Dean finally laid his last card on the table. The president, he told the prosecutors, had actually discussed raising \$1 million to pay the Watergate defendants to keep quiet and he had approved \$250,000 in "hush money" for them in the months since the break-in.

The newspapers were coming out with one story after another, a revelation a day. On April 27, 1973, came the worst news of all: the judge in the Ellsberg espionage case disclosed the secret that Nixon and his men had tried so hard to protect: the Ellsberg break-in, involving Hunt and Liddy.

On April 30, with Dean bargaining with investigators, Nixon moved to preserve his presidency. Dean, Haldeman and Ehrlichman—all forced out. Also gone: Richard G. Kleindienst, who had replaced Mitchell as attorney general and had recently insisted on telling the judge in the Ellsberg case about the break-in by the "plumbers."

Increasingly isolated, his political position eroding, Nixon sought to regain his credibility. On the second day of the Senate hearings, Attorney General-designate Elliot L. Richardson announced the selection of former U.S. solicitor general Archibald Cox to be special prosecutor.

Dean's congressional testimony a month later "electrified the public," said Samuel Dash, the Senate committee's chief counsel. "He was the first eyewitness to the president's involvement in the coverup and payment of hush money, a man who sat in the Oval Office and talked to the president about those things."

Dean told a nation watching on television of a "cancer on the presidency." But it was still Dean's word against Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Nixon. At one point, Dash sent some students from Georgetown law school over to the National Archives.

"These kids came back with their eyes bulging," Dash recalled recently. It seems that Magruder, at the end of the 1972 campaign, had packed up a bunch of his "Eyes Only" memos from Haldeman and Ehrlichman and sent them to the archives for storage.

But the most incriminating evidence of all were the president's own words.

Dean had told investigators that Nixon seemed to be whispering into a bookcase during one of their Watergate conversations, almost as if he were afraid the room was bugged. Committee staffers suspected a secret taping system and began methodically interviewing White House aides. They had gone through about 50 before getting to Alexander Butterfield, the man who had first confirmed Hunt's White House employment to the FBI.

Butterfield, a former Air Force pilot, said

recently that he had made up his mind "that if the question is direct, I'll have to give a direct answer."

On July 13, a Friday, 4½ hours into an interview with Senate investigators, Don Sanders, a Republican committee staff member, asked the right question. "I was wondering when you would get around to asking me that," Butterfield replied.

In the 20 years he has had to think about it, Butterfield, now 66 and a San Diego businessman, wonders whether "maybe, deep down, I wanted to say it."

Butterfield's revelation set in motion a bitter constitutional fight. Cox and the Senate committee both wanted the tapes. Nixon refused, citing executive privilege as protecting presidential material. On July 23, 1973, for the first time in 166 years, a president of the United States was subpoenaed. Nixon refused that request too.

On Oct. 20, in a desperate exercise of presidential power quickly dubbed the "Saturday Night Massacre," Nixon ordered Richardson to fire Cox, who had rejected a compromise on the tapes. He refused and quit. Nixon ordered Richardson's deputy, William D. Ruckelshaus to fire Cox. He refused and was fired. Reaching down one more level, Nixon ordered Solicitor General Robert H. Bork to oust Cox. Bork did.

Nixon finally won—and lost. Twenty years later, it seems so much more inevitable than it did then. The House Judiciary Committee immediately began impeachment proceedings. A new special prosecutor took Cox's place. Nixon gave up the tapes, under Supreme Court order. Many include profanities. One was missing 18½ minutes. But what the rest showed was damning enough. Impeachment loomed. The later release of other tapes made it virtually certain.

Todd Christofferson, then Sirica's 26-year-old law clerk, remembers the day the tapes arrived. No one had a machine that could handle reel-to-reel tapes, so Sirica's office borrowed one from the White House.

Christofferson and Sirica went to a windowless jury room, put a specially rigged set of headphones on, and listened, hoping to hear the words that would exonerate the president. Christofferson recalled how he felt as Nixon participated in hush money and coverup conversations. He felt that Nixon had another choice.

"He could have said, 'No, it goes no further. Let the chips fall where they may.' And he didn't, and it mushroomed. That one failing brought the whole house down."

Staff writer Lawrence Meyer and staff researchers Lucy Shackelford and Mary Stepp contributed to this report.