

A Remembrance

James Doyle, who served as a spokesman for the Watergate special prosecutors from June, 1973 until May, 1975, is now a *Newsweek* correspondent, with a forthcoming book on the Watergate prosecutors, "Not Above the Law," to be published in June.

By James Doyle

Charles Ruff, the fourth and final Watergate special prosecutor, has an excellent sense of timing.

Yesterday was four years to the day since Archibald Cox stood among friends in an elegant blue reception room of the solicitor general's office and took the oath as the first special prosecutor. There is a nice symmetry there.

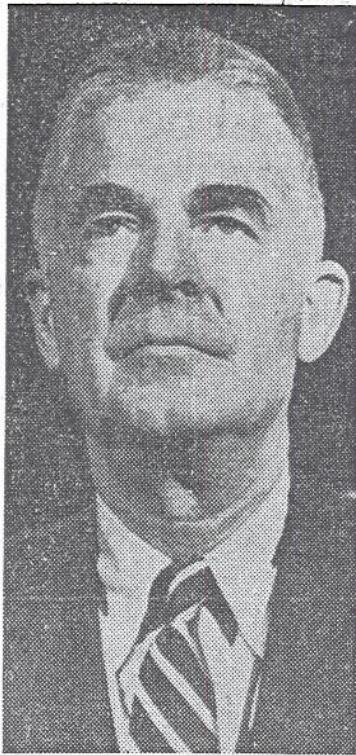
It's a felicitous time to say a quiet goodbye to an office some thought born in self-righteousness. Richard M. Nixon's recent performance on television, expounding his theory of the divine illegal right of Presidents, says the last word about why we need a special prosecutor.

I spent two of the most exciting years of my life within the sealed-off compound on the eighth and ninth floors of 1425 K St., which was the home—the bunker, really—of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force.

At one time I could recite the won-lost record of convictions, appeals denied, historic Supreme Court precedents. What I remember now is somewhat different.

I remember Cox presiding over those bone-dry but startling "seminars" in his office with the leaders of the various prosecution teams. Like clockwork every Thurs-

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ARCHIBALD COX
... startling "seminars"

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day afternoon at four each task force chief gave his report in a deliberately flat monotone. There we were each week, reciting the evidence of high crimes that, were it to be published in one edition of *The Washington Post*, would have shaken the world (as it eventually did). And there was Cox, looking over his half-glasses like a college professor, taking in the information without a word, waiting for the next student to recite.

I remember the angry confrontations we used to have in that same of-

fice with Cox's successor, Leon Jaworski. Often it seemed those of us on the staff and Jaworski were on different wave lengths. Sometimes the walls shook a bit from the shouting within.

I remember, vividly, the times Leon would be sitting behind what we thought of as Archie's desk, red-faced with anger as he answered some assault from his staff, when his private, "red alert" telephone would ring.

It was an emergency line used for confidentiality and speed by the Attorney General, the White House lawyers, and a few others. Unfortunately, the number had been assigned previ-

ously to a paint store.

"No," Jaworski would say into the receiver in his most patient voice, "We do not have late white paint on sale today." The room would explode with bursts of laughter. Those errant phone calls often saved us from each other.

I remember some days sitting at my desk hour upon hour, fielding as many as 200 telephone calls while John Barker, my colleague, fielded a like number from the press corps. In the worst of times we tried to calm ourselves as well as a near-hysterical press corps, crazed by too little information about what was going on.

Most of all I remember the earnest young lawyers whose names you don't recall and never will. Every so often I have lunch with a few of them in some posh Washington dining room, on some expense account. It starts with a recitation of current and boring problems. (Most of them are now in high-priced law firms or carpeted government law offices.)

But it always ends up with a flush of pride about those days when we were at the center of the legal universe in this country, making decisions no one had the right to expect from such a young crowd, even with the few steadier older hands to guide them.

Yesterday, I had lunch with the

No New Appeal For Ehrlichman

Associated Press

Former White House aide John D. Ehrlichman will not ask the Supreme Court to reconsider his Watergate conviction and prison sentence, an attorney for Ehrlichman said yesterday.

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected the appeals of Ehrlichman, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and ex-White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman. The three were convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and giving false testimony under oath and were sentenced to 30 months to eight years in prison for roles in the Watergate cover-up.

"The Supreme Court has spoken and we accept the decision," Washington attorney Lawrence H. Schwartz said, speaking for Ehrlichman. "No further action in that regard will be taken," he said.

third special prosecutor, Hank Ruth, a cynical idealist who kept saying all through those two years, "This is a no-win situation." He resigned in the fall of 1975, and he refused to disclose any further evidence against Nixon in his final report. He was roundly criticized, despite the correctness of his position and the good sense of such a precedent in those neo-McCarthyite times. I telephoned him at the time.

"What do you think, Hank?" I asked.

"I told you this was a no-win situation," he said.

Yesterday I asked Hank Ruth for his on-the-record comment on the occasion of the closing of an office he helped create, which had spent about \$8 million investigating one big case.

"My guess," Ruth said, "is that by the time all the lawyers, defendants, former Presidents and former prosecutors get through talking and writing about Watergate, the taxes on the royalties will pay for what we spent."