

and a former White House aide.

Gordon Strachan, a former assistant to H.R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff.

Indictments are somewhat less likely but nevertheless possible, according to congressional and White House sources, against: Robert Reisner, who was Magruder's top assistant on the reelection committee; Dwight Chapin, a former White House aide; and Donald Segretti, a California lawyer who has admitted some attempts to disrupt the campaigns of Democratic presidential candidates. Since so much of the secret and unreported money used to finance the espionage came from a safe in the office of Maurice Stans, the former Commerce Secretary who headed the Nixon campaign's fund-raising efforts, he is also considered a possible grand jury target. One Senate investigator insists, however, that "Stans was a tool. He is not morally culpable."

As he has so often in the recent developments in the fast expanding scandal, Counsel Dean emerged as a key and mysterious figure. TIME has learned that it was Dean, surprisingly, who was most instrumental in getting the grand jury off what seemed like a dead-end course. Washington Correspondent Sandy Smith reconstructed the following chronology:

**Charges.** The big break came after Judge Sirica, on March 23, tentatively imposed heavy sentences on most of the seven convicted Watergate conspirators but offered to review the jail terms later, implying that the sentences might be reduced if the convicted men told everything that they knew about the break-in and bugging. On April 5, McCord, who alone had not yet been sentenced, began making sensational charges before the grand jury. He claimed that Mitchell, Dean and Magruder knew about the Watergate bugging plans in advance and had discussed them at a meeting in Mitchell's office in February 1972, when Mitchell was still Attorney General. Further, according to McCord, plans were approved then to bug the Washington headquarters of Democratic Candidate George McGovern and the Miami Beach hotel suites of top party officials during the Democratic National Convention.

McCord also contended that after the men were arrested inside the Watergate on June 17, they received regular payoffs to keep quiet. These amounted to at least \$1,000 per man each month and were, he said, delivered in cash by Mrs. E. Howard Hunt, wife of one of the arrested men. Hunt, a former White House consultant, later pleaded guilty to burglary and wiretapping. His wife was killed in a Chicago airplane crash on Dec. 8; she was carrying \$10,000 in cash at the time. McCord also contended that the payoff money was coming from the Nixon reelection committee.

Trouble was, nearly all of the McCord testimony was based on hearsay.

McCord had cited as his sources G. Gordon Liddy, another former White House aide convicted in the wiretapping, and Hunt. But Liddy was refusing to speak to the grand jury at all. Rather than talk, he accepted an additional sentence for contempt of court. Hunt did testify further before the jury, but apparently was not supporting McCord's charges about the Watergate planning and the payoffs—or did not have personal knowledge of them.

Thus the grand jury seemed frustrated in trying to confirm McCord's reports. But on April 6, for reasons that



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ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD KLEINDIENST

are still not clear, Counsel Dean gave information to the Watergate prosecutors in the Justice Department that corroborated for the first time much of what McCord was claiming. His motive could have been connected with the fact that only two weeks earlier he had been publicly accused of "probably" lying to the FBI. The accusation had been made by L. Patrick Gray, acting FBI director, at his unsuccessful confirmation hearings.

The next break came on April 11, when Jeb Magruder's chief assistant, Robert Reisner, appeared before the grand jury. With knowledge of his boss's activities, he apparently backed most of McCord's testimony, including the claim that Magruder had attended a

## It's Inoperative: They

THE Nixon Administration has developed a new language—a kind of Nix-speak. Government officials are entitled to make flat statements one day, and the next day reverse field with the simple phrase, "I misspoke myself." White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler enlarged the vocabulary last week, declaring that all of Nixon's previous statements on Watergate were "inoperative." Not incorrect, not misinformed, not untrue—simply inoperative, like batteries gone dead. Euphemisms notwithstanding, the Nixon Administration's verbal record on Watergate is enough to turn ardent believers into skeptics. Some examples of "inoperative" statements from Administration officials who misspoke themselves:

► On June 19, 1972, only two days after the break-in, Ziegler refused to comment on the incident and called it a "third-rate burglary attempt," adding, "This is something that should not fall into the political process."

► On Aug. 28, Attorney General Richard Kleindienst pledged that the Justice Department's investigation of the Watergate case would be "the most extensive, thorough and comprehensive investigation since the assassination of President Kennedy . . . No credible, fair-minded person is going to be able to say that we whitewashed or dragged our feet on it." In fact, five months later only seven men had been brought to trial as a result of that investigation—the five directly involved in the break-in on June 17, plus a low-level White House consultant and a former White House staffer. Until recently, top officials in the Justice Department made little attempt to find out who had planned and approved the operation.

► On Aug. 29, President Nixon remarked of a Watergate investigation

February meeting with Mitchell about the bugging plans. But a greater revelation came three days later, on April 14, when Magruder went to Justice Department officials and told of the February meeting with Mitchell and Dean. This was the first confirmation by any participant in the meeting that the Watergate bugging had been discussed at this high level. Magruder said that Liddy displayed poster-sized operational charts of the wiretapping operation. But at that time, Magruder added, John Mitchell did not give clear approval to go ahead with the operation.

Magruder further revealed that there was another meeting a few weeks later with Mitchell in Key Biscayne, Fla., at which the wiretapping was discussed again. The meeting was attended, he said, by Liddy and Fred LaRue—and it was then, according to Magruder, that Mitchell did give his ap-

## Misspoke Themselves

being conducted by his counsel, John W. Dean III: "I can say categorically that his investigation indicates that no one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident."

► On Oct. 16, Clark MacGregor, then chief of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, said: "Using innuendo, third-person hearsay, unsubstantiated charges, anonymous sources and huge scare headlines, the [Washington] *Post* has maliciously sought to give the appearance of a direct connection between the White House and the Watergate, a charge which the *Post* knows—and a half a dozen investigations have found—to be false."

► On Oct. 19, Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of C.R.P., told *TIME* Correspondent Hays Gorey: "Listen, when this is all over, you'll know that there were only seven people who knew about the Watergate, and they are the seven who were indicted by the grand jury."

► On March 24, 1973, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott quoted Nixon as saying: "I have nothing to hide. The White House has nothing to hide. I repeat, we have nothing to hide, and you are authorized to make that statement in my name."

► On March 26, Ziegler "flatly" denied "any prior knowledge on the part of Mr. Dean regarding Watergate."

► On March 29, former Attorney General John Mitchell said: "I deeply resent the slanderous and false statements about me concerning the Watergate matter reported as being based on hearsay and leaked out. I have previously denied any prior knowledge of or involvement in the Watergate affair and again reaffirm such denials."

proval to proceed with the plans. LaRue, however, has denied that Mitchell did so. Magruder also told investigators that both Mitchell and Dean had approved the payments to the wiretappers to keep them quiet.

After these charges and revelations by Magruder, the three Justice Department attorneys prosecuting the case—Earl J. Silbert, Seymour Glanzer and Donald E. Campbell—set up a meeting on Sunday, April 15, with their Justice Department superiors, Kleindienst and Petersen. The latter two, in turn, immediately asked to see Nixon. Explained one Justice official: "These findings had to be brought to the attention of Nixon to give him the opportunity to salvage the presidency from the shambles of the Watergate evidence."

The meeting with Kleindienst and Petersen in the Executive Office Building apparently moved Nixon to make

his announcement of "major developments" two days later. The meeting also resulted in Kleindienst's decision to remove himself from further supervision of the case. He tried to keep this secret, but the word got out, and Kleindienst conceded that he had withdrawn because "persons with whom I have had personal and professional relationships" were being implicated. Newsmen took that to refer to 1) Mitchell, for whom Kleindienst had served as a deputy at the Justice Department and to whom he was greatly indebted for his promotion; and 2) Dean, who had been

that Nixon had asked Ehrlichman to take over as his own top aide in investigating Watergate, replacing Dean, in whom the President had obviously lost confidence. Martha Mitchell insisted to newsmen that her husband had been called in by the President and had talked to him. She called Ziegler's report that her husband had not seen Nixon "a god-blessed lie." Said Mrs. Mitchell in a telephone call to the Associated Press: "The President wanted Mr. Mitchell down there. They're trying to get him and me as the two culprits." If Mitchell did not see Nixon, the snub seemed a demeaning way for the President to deal with an intimate on such a grave matter as implication in the scandal.

As speculation rose about Mitchell's involvement, the nation's onetime law-enforcement chief remained remarkably calm. Publicly, he scoffed at it all. "The stories are getting sillier all the time, aren't they?" he commented to a reporter. But *TIME* has learned that Mitchell's grand jury testimony at week's end was both self-incriminating and sensational.

Mitchell told the jurors that he had indeed discussed plans to bug Democratic headquarters on three, rather than just two, occasions. He did so in his office as Attorney General on Jan. 24 and Feb. 4, as well as in Key Biscayne about a month later, after he shifted to head the Nixon campaign committee. But on each occasion, Mitchell testified, he opposed the plans. This statement directly contradicted Magruder's story. Mitchell said that he thought that his objections had caused the plans to be abandoned.

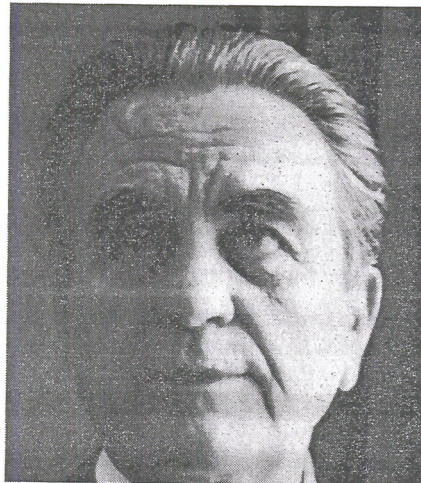
**Lowly.** He did not learn that they were proceeding, Mitchell testified, until the wiretappers were arrested at the Watergate in June. Then, he told the jury, he became certain that someone in the White House had gone over his head and approved the plans. Without White House approval, Mitchell insisted, such lowly figures as Hunt and Liddy would not have dared to go ahead. Mitchell thus passed the buck back to Nixon's White House.

The former Attorney General also told the jury that he had known in advance that his Nixon committee deputy, Magruder, was going to give a false story to the grand jury last summer by denying any advance knowledge of the Watergate plans. Magruder has since conceded to Justice Department officials that he did testify untruthfully, but claims that he did so at the urging of Mitchell. Mitchell denies that he told Magruder to lie. Magruder is thus wide open to a perjury charge and is in turn accusing Mitchell of suborning that perjury.

As for the payments to the wiretappers, Mitchell told the jury that he did approve such payments, beginning before the 1972 election and continuing even after he was no longer technically the head of the re-election committee. He claimed, however, that the payments



SENATOR SAM ERVIN



JUDGE JOHN J. SIRICA

Kleindienst's own deputy from February 1969 to July 1970. Full control of the Justice Department probe was turned over to Henry Petersen, who had handled it all along—but with no great distinction in its limited early phase.

Dean and Mitchell were now on center stage in the developing drama. Both were called to testify by the grand jury. On April 14, Mitchell had been spotted by newsmen as he arrived quietly at the White House. Press Secretary Ziegler confirmed that the former Attorney General had been summoned to talk to John Ehrlichman, the President's chief adviser on domestic affairs. Ziegler would not disclose the nature of the talks. Yet it was soon learned