

Nixon Aide Reported Being Forced Out

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—Dwight L. Chapin, President Nixon's appointments secretary, who has been linked to political espionage activities of the Republican re-election committee, has reportedly decided to leave the White House staff.

One high-ranking Administration official told the New York Times that Mr. Chapin was being forced to leave as a result of newspaper disclosures naming him as the White House contact with Donald H. Segretti, a California lawyer who has said he played a key role in what he describes as widespread Republican efforts to disrupt the Democratic primaries and harass Democratic Presidential candidates.

A former White House associate of Mr. Chapin subsequently also said, "Dwight's going to be leaving." He said that he, too, had heard that Mr. Chapin was being forced out.

Friends of Mr. Chapin, who is 32 years old, say that he has already rejected or discouraged offers from defense industries for \$70,000 a year or more, far above his current salary, because the positions would have involved lobbying.

Mr. Chapin's office said that he was unavailable to comment on the report, but Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, later pointed out that the White House announced after the November elections "that Dwight Chapin had been asked to stay on and we have previously denied any involvement on his part in the Watergate."

Mr. Warren said that he had not discussed The Times's information with Mr. Chapin.

According to one of The Times's sources, Mr. Chapin was initially asked to quit his job by his immediate superior, H. R. Haldeman, the White

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House chief of staff, soon after President Nixon's re-election.

Mr. Chapin reportedly protested the decision bitterly, telling Mr. Haldeman that his prospects for getting a good job in business would be lessened if he became the White House scapegoat for Mr. Segretti's political espionage activities.

Mr. Chapin was also said to have declared that the press

would instantly take his departure as confirmation of his involvement, and further told Mr. Haldeman, this source said, that he would "blow the whistle" if he was immediately dismissed.

Mr. Haldeman was said to have agreed to permit an interval to elapse so that Mr. Chapin could gracefully leave the White House after arranging a good job. It was further agreed, the source said, that the White House would help get him relocated.

Some aspects of this account could not be corroborated by The Times. A number of present and former White House officials, however, confirmed that Mr. Chapin is now looking for a job. "It's floating all over town," one said.

'Creative' Work Sought

"He's definitely shopping around," said one of Mr. Chapin's acquaintances. "He's had several offers and given them consideration, but he did not want to be a lobbyist for companies in the military business."

"He wants something more creative," the source said. "His idea is that he'd be prostituting himself if he took a job exploiting his contacts in the White House and Government."

Mr. Chapin was first linked to the so-called Watergate scandal last Oct. 15 when The Washington Post reported that a friend of Mr. Segretti had cited Mr. Chapin as the chief Washington contact for an espionage operation financed by the Republicans.

Mr. Segretti was said to have been involved in a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage financed from a then-secret campaign fund of the Committee for the Re-election of the President and directed in part by the White House.

Two days later The Times reported that Mr. Segretti had made at least six long-distance telephone calls to the White House and another call to the suburban Maryland home of Mr. Chapin between mid-March and June 23, when, it was later reported, Mr. Segretti was initially questioned by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation seeking information about his activities.

The White House heatedly denounced the published reports at the time as hearsay but refused to answer any specific questions or to deny the accounts categorically.

"I will not dignify with comment stories based on hearsay, character assassination, innuendo, guilt by association," the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, told newsmen then.

Up to now, White House officials have repeatedly said that they did not know either about Mr. Segretti's espionage activities or the political intelligence operation headed by E. Howard Hunt, a former White House consultant, that ultimately resulted in the break-in last June 17 on the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate complex here.

Mr. Hunt and six others, including five men arrested by the police inside the Democratic offices, were indicted by a Federal grand jury on a variety of criminal charges stemming from the break-in. Five men have pleaded guilty thus far in the trial now under way in the United States District Court here.

On the few occasions when they have discussed the Watergate affair publicly, high-level White House officials have tended to differentiate between the activities of the Hunt operation and Mr. Segretti's espionage operation, without conceding any knowledge of either.

Shortly after Mr. Chapin was publicly linked to the espionage activities, John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's chief domestic adviser, told a television interviewer that he was not "personally" aware of the Segretti operation but added, "This kind of thing, though, finding out what the other fellow's schedule is and so on, has gone on since time immemorial. This kind of thing has been in American politics as long as I can remember."

Mr. Chapin's impending departure has stunned some of his friends. "He'd give his arm for the President and is totally loyal" one said. Another cited his "phenomenal" effort to help set up the 1971 summit meeting in Peking between President Nixon and the Chinese leaders and added, "I can't see him taking any outside job if he could stay on."

Mr. Chapin has been described as extremely personable, likeable and a devout disciple of Mr. Haldeman, for whom he has worked since 1962 in the various Nixon campaigns, in the White House, and at the J. Walter Thompson Advertising agency in Los Angeles.

He was graduated in 1963 from the University of Southern California, where he was active in a conservative political organization whose members in the early nineteen-sixties included Mr. Segretti and many current White House staff members—among them Mr. Ziegler, Tim Elbourne and Herbert L. Porter. Mr. Chapin has acknowl-



Dwight L. Chapin

edged knowing Mr. Segretti "since college days."

Mr. Chapin's current White House position, appointments secretary, was among the most important in the Johnson Administration under such men as W. Marvin Watson and Walter Jenkins. The job involves close daily access to the President, control of his schedule and overall coordination of Presidential trips.

Under Mr. Nixon, however, its importance has diminished considerably, although its functions have remained similar. However, friends recall that Mr. Chapin would occasionally help in presenting their views directly to the President on some critical issues. Basically, however, Mr. Chapin has been viewed largely as a subordinate to Mr. Haldeman.

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