

Cox's Staff Offices in Capital, 9 Floors Up, Guarded Tightly

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WASHINGTON, June 19 — The five-room complex on the ninth floor of a modern 12-story building is guarded by closed-circuit television burglar alarms on its windows, electronic sensors and other unidentified safety devices.

The offices house the burgeoning staff of Archibald Cox, the special Watergate prosecutor. He and his aides formally began work there last week. The address is 1425 K Street, N.W., in the heart of downtown Washington. It also houses other Government and private offices.

Security is dominant. In a case that has often revolved around stolen documents, Xeroxed papers shredded memorandums and leaks to the press, the specially appointed prosecution is determined to protect the secrecy of its work.

The guard on the street floor and visitors are free to take an elevator. But once on the ninth floor, there is no indication of an entrance to the suite. Off to one side of the nine-floor lobby, across from the Grocery Manufacturers of America, is a large metal door with a small sign heading "push bell."

Bell Releases Lock

The bell is answered by a buzzing that releases the lock. It is similar to the arrangement found in many apartment buildings. Inside is an armed guard at a desk. The visitor identifies himself and the purpose of his visit.

After checking with the official the visitor wishes to see, the guard supplies him with a numbered identification badge that is worn around the neck on a chain. The visitor also is escorted to the office to be visited. Some badges are yellow; others are green. The cards are returned to the guard when the visitor leaves.

The green badge, bearing a photo of the staff member, signifies a permanent position. To get such a card, all per-

sonnel must undergo an intensive security check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

But even with such a badge, access to some of the office's myriad files is limited.

"Within the permanent staff, security levers as built in," says Dean St. Dennis, a spokesman. "Access is very severely restricted" and I mean very restricted."

Doors leading from the stairwell of the building are locked on all floors. A special code opens the combination locks on rest room doors. Specially selected guards occasionally patrol the halls.

These stringent measures were taken under strict instructions to insure that the offices are "as secure as the most secure F.B.I. offices," Mr. St. Dennis said. "Obviously we have a great deal of highly sensitive and confidential information which needs to be protected. Everybody here understands that."

At a news conference last Friday, James Vorenberg, a Harvard law professor and special assistant to Mr. Cox, carefully avoided revealing any security information.

"We think security is essential so that witnesses and the public in general have confidence in the information furnished to the special prosecutor," he said.

The Justice Department has announced that all of its files on the international Telephone and Telegraph Corporation case—more than 34 boxes of material—will be moved into these offices. In addition, it was announced that the files of the United States Attorney's office that had been handling Watergate will be moved there.