

Elliot L. Richardson had a drinking problem.

Deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren also denied that President Nixon had accused Richardson of lying about his involvement in the firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox.

The Washington Post, in a front-page story Saturday, quoted senators who met with Mr. Nixon and White House chief of staff Alexander Haig last week as saying Haig made a reference to Richardson's drinking.

The Post said Haig quoted Richardson as saying, "I'd had a drink and I was tired." The Post said one senator present took this as an attempt to revive Richardson's conviction in 1939 of drunken driving charges and a 1951 driving accident.

Warren said no one "in any position of authority" at the White House was involved in spreading that report.

"We would certainly be interested in finding out who is doing this and we thoroughly disassociate ourselves from it," he said.

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White House Denies Reports on Richardson

A presidential spokesman denied yesterday that anyone at the White House was involved in spreading a report that former Attorney General