

John Dean Steps Into the Spotlight

After weeks of fleeting public glimpses of John W. Dean III and intensifying publicity about his role in the Watergate affair, the young former White House counsel today had a national television audience for what have been billed as significant — perhaps startling — accusations against the President of the United States.

Up to now, the public has had to rely on only occasional and often conflicting views of John Dean.

Like many members of the Nixon White House, he was anonymous until the Watergate scandal broke.

He was brought fully into the open by a man whose curiosity about Watergate now is well known: Chief Judge John J. Sirica of U.S. District Court here.

Dean's attorneys had filed papers saying that Dean, fearing the White House was trying to make him the Watergate scapegoat, had secreted some top-secret documents in a safe deposit box, and that he wanted Sirica to take control of them. Sirica said he would hear the motion, but he wanted Dean in the courtroom.

DEAN APPEARED on March 14. He didn't say much during the hearing, and afterwards he refused to say anything to reporters, allowing himself to be led away by his lawyer, press agent and onetime brother-in-law, Robert C. McCandless.

After that hearing, however, Dean cautiously began to open up, first in an interview with The Star-News, then with CBS.

His message: Sometime last winter he decided the truth should be told about Watergate, and he was going to tell it.

John Dean, now 34, was born in Akron, Ohio. He attended Staunton Military Academy in Virginia, where he roomed with Barry Goldwater Jr. According to one report, Dean dated the young woman who is now



—Associated Press

JOHN DEAN III

Mrs. Goldwater, while Goldwater dated the young woman who is now the former Mrs. Dean, Karla Hennings.

KARLA HENNINGS and her sister, Sue, are the daughters of the late Sen. Thomas Hennings, D-Mo. Dean married Karla, and McCandless, a top Humphrey aide during the 1968 presidential campaign and now one of Dean's attorneys, married Sue. Both couples since have been divorced. Dean has married the former Maureen Kane. The couple have a fashionable waterfront home in Alexandria, and they drive a burgundy Porsche 911. They have been described by an associate as "the picture book beautiful people."

From the Staunton academy, Dean went to Colgate, then to the College of Wooster in Ohio, where he was graduated in 1961. He was, he told The Star-News, thinking of becoming a writer until he came to Washington and developed a taste for government. He stayed here, attended Georgetown Law School, obtaining his degree there in 1965.

Dean was fired from his first job, at the law firm of Welch & Morgan, for what Vincent B. Welch later told the Civil Service Commis-

sion had been "unethical conduct." Two and a half years later, however, Welch — "acting on appeal from Dean's political friends," according to columnist Jack Anderson — changed the record to say that Dean's firing "resulted from a basic disagreement over law firm policies regarding the nature and scope of an associate's activities."

OPINIONS OF DEAN vary widely. Presidential speechwriter Patrick Buchanan, has said he "very helpful and friendly, and always came up with the answers very quickly." But another associate has said he was helpful only when expedient.

"John doesn't have circle of friends," this last person told The New York Times. "He never has, and he never was liked. He doesn't have the bonhomie or camaraderie. Everything he does is done for a point or a purpose with his peers, and it shows. He tends to use them for an advantage."

After his dismissal from Welch & Morgan, Dean next turned to government. His first job was as chief minority counsel to the House Judiciary Committee. He then spent two years as associate director of the National Commission on Reform of Criminal Law, and from there in 1969 moved to the new Nixon Justice Department as an associate deputy attorney general.

His duties at Justice included helping to draft national crime legislation—including, coincidentally, the statute under which the Senate committee granted him limited immunity—and negotiating demonstration permits with anti-war organizations.

DEAN went to the White House in July 1970. He told The Star-News that he was reluctant to accept a job as White House counsel at first, but changed his mind after personal meetings with both Nixon and presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman.

By all accounts he was busy at the White House.

According to testimony before Senate or House panels, he attended the first two meetings in Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell's office at which the Watergate bugging was discussed; he tried to get the CIA to take some of the blame for the bugging after the June 17, 1972, arrests; he coached witnesses in perjury; he and Ehrlichman gave possibly incriminating evidence from conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.'s office to acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III, with orders to destroy it, and he passed an offer of money and executive clemency through an intermediary to conspirator McCord.

In March, however, he told his superiors he was going to come clean—and quickly got the impression that they were going to shift all the blame to him.

AT THE END of March, he asked McCandless and Charles N. Shaffer, a Rockville attorney, to represent him. On April 2, Shaffer contacted the Watergate prosecutors to offer his client's testimony in exchange for full immunity, and on April 6 the prosecutors called Dean in — for the first of eight times.

On April 15, Ehrlichman has said in sworn statements, the President effectively relieved Dean of his duties as White House counsel. The next day, the President tried without success to have Dean sign a letter of resignation.

On April 19, Dean made his first public statement since his name had been brought into the affair. "Some may hope or think that I will become a scapegoat in the Watergate case," he said. "Anyone who believes this does not know me, know the true facts, nor understand our system of justice."

On April 30, he was fired.

BARRY KALB