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# Conflict Over Nixon Call To Gray Is Raised Again

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 1—A nagging conflict in statements that has persisted throughout the Senate Watergate hearings arose again in testimony today.

The discrepancy concerns a telephone conversation July 6, 1972, between President Nixon and L. Patrick Gray 3d, then acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That was 19 days after the Republican burglary at the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex here.

Witnesses have generally agreed that Mr. Gray told Mr. Nixon that persons on the White House staff might be trying to block the Watergate investigation. Mr. Gray testified he told Mr. Nixon that some aides were "trying to mortally wound you."

It is also generally agreed that Mr. Nixon responded by telling Mr. Gray to press ahead with the bureau's investigation.

## Reason for Phone Call

But there are different versions as to why Mr. Nixon called Mr. Gray that day in the first place. These versions were expressed by the President in a public statement last May; by Mr. Gray and John D. Ehrlichman, a former top aide to the President, in testimony before the Senate Watergate committee and a House subcommittee, and by Clark MacGregor, Mr. Nixon's former campaign director, in testimony before the Senate committee today.

In his statement last May 22, Mr. Nixon declared that he called Mr. Gray on July 6, 1972, "to congratulate him on his successful handling of the hijacking of a Pacific Southwest Airlines plane the previous day."

Mr. Nixon added, "Mr. Gray suggested that the matter of Watergate might lead higher. I told him to press ahead with his investigation."

Last summer, Mr. Ehrlichman, the former domestic

affairs adviser at the White House, told a House Armed Services subcommittee that he was familiar with the conversation and, in fact, had taken "verbatim notes" of a discussion he had afterward with Mr. Nixon about the Gray conversation.

"Does his account (Mr. Nixon's May 22 statement) square completely with your account of that conversation?" Mr. Ehrlichman was asked.

## Concern Over Interference

"I don't believe it does," Mr. Ehrlichman responded.

He went on to say that Mr. Nixon had called Mr. Gray because Mr. MacGregor had called the President that morning and expressed concern that the F.B.I. investigation was being interfered with.

Mr. MacGregor said today that he had made no such call to Mr. Nixon. Mr. MacGregor did say, however, that on the previous night Mr. Gray called him to congratulate him on being named campaign director and had parenthetically mentioned that he was worried about the Watergate investigation.

Three weeks ago, Mr. MacGregor said today, he went through a receiving line at the White House and Mr. Nixon said to him, "Clark, you did not mention the Pat Gray call to me."

Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Republican of Connecticut, asked Mr. MacGregor incredulously, "You mean, the President of the United States turns to you while you are going through a receiving line and says, 'Clark, I didn't talk to you on July 6?'"

"Apparently," Mr. MacGregor replied, "someone had brought it to his attention."

Mr. Gray insisted in his testimony before the Senate committee that he called Mr. MacGregor at 10:51 A.M. on July 6, not on July 5 as Mr. MacGregor contended, and that the President called him back "37 minutes later, at 11:29 A.M."