

Strachan Reportedly Gave Bugging Plan to Haldeman

His Lawyer Tells Senate Inquiry Staff Ex-White House Aide Sent Data on Plot Before It Was Discovered

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Special to The New York Times

6/18/73

WASHINGTON, June 17—An attorney for Gordon C. Strachan, the former White House aide, has told the Senate's Watergate committee staff that his client forwarded information about the Watergate bugging plot to H. R. Haldeman before the operation was discovered a year ago today, according to committee lawyers.

Mr. Haldeman, who resigned as the White House chief of staff in April, has denied under oath having any knowledge of the wiretapping operation at Democratic National Committee headquarters here before it was exposed by the arrest of five burglars in the party's Watergate offices.

John M. Bray, a Washington lawyer who is representing Mr. Strachan, could not be reached for comment on the report that his client was prepared to contradict Mr. Haldeman's sworn assertion.

Magruder Told of Data

Jeb Stuart Magruder, the former deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, told the Senate committee last week that he had kept Mr. Strachan informed of plans for the bugging operation and of its progress, as well as of later attempts to cover up White House and re-

election committee involvement in the plot.

But Mr. Magruder told the Senators that he was not certain whether Mr. Strachan, who he said had also read transcripts of the overheard telephone conversations, had passed any of the information on to his superior.

Dean Report on Tap

There were these other developments in the unfolding Watergate drama today:

¶John W. Dean 3d will tell the Senate committee when he testifies this week that it was Mr. Haldeman who directed that a tap be placed on the office of Lawrence F. O'Brien, the former Democratic national chairman, according to Time magazine.

¶In its issue on sale tomorrow, Time reports that Mr. Dean, a former White House counsel, will also testify to his belief that Charles W. Colson, a former special counsel to President Nixon, had prior knowledge of the bugging. Mr. Colson has repeatedly denied having such knowledge. In an interview published today in The Maine Sunday Telegram, he said he would "stake my life" on Mr. Nixon's not being involved in Watergate.

¶Newsweek magazine reports in its latest issue that L. Patrick Gray 3d, who resigned as acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in April, turned over confiden-

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tial F.B.I. files on Watergate to Mr. Dean after being assured by him that he was reporting directly to Mr. Nixon on the matter.

President Nixon announced last Aug. 29 that, on the basis of an investigation by Mr. Dean, no one then employed by the White House or the re-election committee had been involved in Watergate. The White House later conceded that Mr. Dean had made no formal investigation.

¶Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., the Watergate committee's vice chairman, disclosed in a television interview that he urged President Nixon last February "not to invoke the doctrine of executive privilege" to limit the testimony of present or former White House staff members on the Watergate affair.

In an appearance on the American Broadcasting Company's "issues and answers" program, Senator Baker, a Tennessee Republican, said he had no reason to "presuppose" that the question of executive privilege would be raised in connection with Mr. Dean's forthcoming testimony, which he believed would be "a rather complete story."

¶Lawyers for former attorney General John N. Mitchell acknowledged that they planned to cite what they consider the prejudicial effect of publicity from his coming appearance before the Senate committee to counter his expected indictment with the Watergate bugging case.

Warns of Publicity Issue

Plato Cacheris, one of Mr. Mitchell's attorneys, said that although he did not expect the former Nixon campaign director to invoke the Fifth Amendment before the committee when he testifies, some time this summer, the issue of pre-trial publicity "would have to be raised" in any subsequent Watergate trial.

Mr. Mitchell was indicted by a Federal grand jury in New York on May 10 in connection with a secret, \$200,000 cash contribution to the Nixon Re-election campaign by Robert L. Vesco, the financier.

Maurice H. Stans, the former chief Nixon fund-raiser, was indicted at the same time on identical charges of perjury

and conspiracy to obstruct justice and to defraud the United States. The Senate committee carefully avoided questioning Mr. Stans on the Vesco matter when he testified before it last Tuesday.

Mr. Magruder told the committee last Thursday that it was Mr. Mitchell who had given the final approval for the bugging plans and had later helped to concoct the cover-up story. Sources close to Mr. Mitchell have indicated that his account of the matter, when it comes, will differ substantially from Mr. Magruder's.

Alioto Assails Mitchell

Mayor Joseph L. Alioto of San Francisco denounced Mr. Mitchell today as an "evil man who would do anything for a political purpose."

Mr. Alioto charged that his own 1969 indictment by a Federal grand jury on charges of fee-splitting in connection with legal work he had done before assuming office was the result of a secret, "political sabotage" organization in the Nixon Administration headed by the former Attorney General.

The Mayor was subsequently acquitted of the charges, which were brought as he was preparing to oppose the re-election of Gov. Ronald Reagan of California, a Republican.

In an appearance with other Mayors on a one-hour telecast of N.B.C.'s "Meet the Press" program, Mr. Alioto remarked that, in the light of recent disclosure, about Watergate, "I think the people will now understand the nature of the charges that were brought against me."

In another development, a survey by the Opinion Research Corporation, commissioned by C.B.S. News, showed that 48 per cent of those questioned believed that President Nixon had knowledge of the Watergate cover-up plot.

Doubt Advance Knowledge

However, only 23 per cent of the 711 adult voters questioned felt that the President knew in advance of the actual break-in and bugging at Watergate, while 44 per cent said they thought he had no advance knowledge of the incident.

Fifty per cent of those polled, according to C.B.S. News, said they favored impeachment proceedings against the President if it was established that he had prior knowledge of both the break-in and the cover-up, while 41 per cent said they would support impeachment proceedings if it developed that Mr. Nixon knew only of the cover-up itself.

The Senate's Watergate investigating committee, headed by Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, will meet in executive session tomorrow to prepare for Mr. Dean's testimony, which is scheduled to begin on Tuesday and is expected to be the most dramatic so far.