

Haldeman Says He Approved

By John Hanrahan
Washington Post Staff Writer

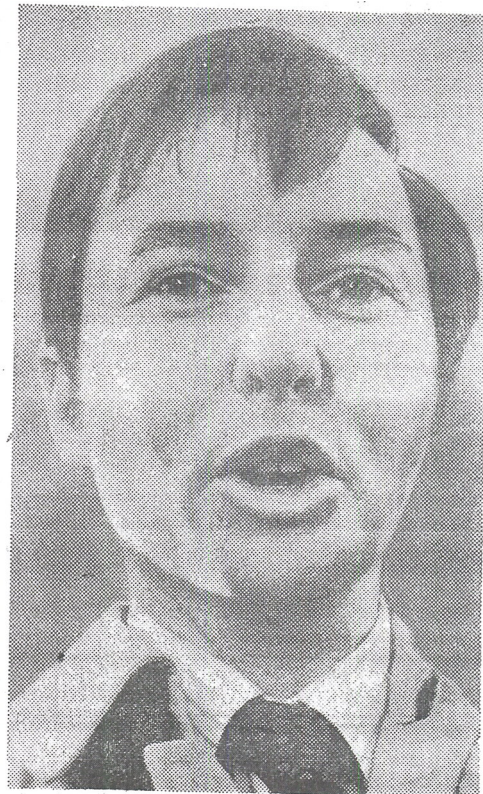
H. R. Haldeman has acknowledged privately to Senate investigators that he approved the hiring of alleged political saboteur Donald H. Segretti and suggested that Segretti be paid in such a way that his activities could not be traced to the White House or the Nixon re-election committee.

But Haldeman said that, in permitting two of his aides to hire Segretti, he had made it clear that Segretti "was not to engage in illegal or improper activities," according to notes taken by members of the staff of the Senate select committee on the Watergate during a May 4 interview with Haldeman.

As he has done publicly, Haldeman also denied that he had any advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in and bugging or that he played any role in the cover-up. His denials contrast sharply with public testimony before the Watergate committee by John W. Dean III, the former counsel to the President, and Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy chairman for the Nixon re-election committee.

According to a copy of the notes, Haldeman, former White House chief of staff,

- Said that he agreed with White House aides, Dwight Chapin and Gordon Strachan in 1971, that they arrange to have Segretti paid by Herbert W. Kalmbach who had "quite substantial funds" remaining from Kalmbach's fund-raising effort for Senate and congressional candidates in 1970. (Kalmbach was President



H. R. Haldeman, left, describes the hiring of Donald H. Segretti, right.

Nixon's personal attorney until early this year.) Haldeman said he saw nothing unusual in this arrangement.

- Acknowledged he was aware that Kalmbach was asked to arrange payments to the seven Watergate defendants and their lawyers, but said he understood these were for "legal fees" and that he did not know the funds were allegedly going to help buy the defendants' silence.

- Said that an unnamed newspaper reporter, referred to as "Chapman's friend," served as a political spy for the Nixon campaign.

- Denied knowing in advance that perjury was to be committed at the Watergate trial last January by Herbert L. Porter, former scheduling director for the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Porter, in his public testimony before the Watergate committee, acknowledged committing perjury at the trial as did Magruder. In addition, Magruder told the committee that he had "laid out the true facts" concerning Watergate to Haldeman this January, before the trial. Magruder has acknowledged he participated

in the planning for the Watergate bugging as well as the cover-up.

The summary does not indicate whether Haldeman was asked whether he knew Magruder was going to perjure himself at the trial. But Haldeman, according to the summary, said he knew nothing of the cover-up until March of this year.

tr for add three

Dean, in his public testimony, also implicated Haldeman in the cover-up, saying he regularly reported to Haldeman to discuss ways of keeping the truth from coming out. Former Attor-

Hiring Segretti

ney General John N. Mitchell, in his public testimony this week, said Haldeman was involved in "a design not to have the stories come out" because they might have hurt Mr. Nixon's re-election effort.

Haldeman, in his May 4 interview, said he recalled discussing with Dean the payments to the Watergate defendants, but that he didn't "recall there was a rationale given or asked for regarding taking care of the legal fees. . ."

"Insofar as it being politically embarrassing if it came out that these payments were being made," the notes quote Haldeman as saying, "I thought it was generally known. I didn't give it a lot of thought."

As to why Kalmbach was to be called upon to come up with funds for the defendants, Haldeman said according to the notes:

"I did not give any significance to the fact that Kalmbach was to raise the money, that it would be done outside channels."

Haldeman, in his May 4 testimony, acknowledged for the first time that he had seen "material from CRP (Committee for the Re-election of the President) regarding intelligence gathering." But, he added: "I don't think that I ever saw anything that looked like copies of material from Democratic headquarters."

Strachan, according to informed sources, is expected to testify before the Watergate committee that he passed on the advance bugging plans for the Watergate to Haldeman.

Haldeman, in his May 4 testimony, said that Strachan had told him after the Watergate arrests that three reports had come to him, labeled as "confidential sources" reports, before the Watergate arrests, "and that in hindsight he thought (they) could have come from the Watergate kind of source."

Haldeman said Strachan told him that only one of the three reports had been forwarded to Haldeman; but that "I have no recollection of seeing that kind of thing but it is possible it was sent to me."

Strachan did not identify the source of the information, Haldeman said, but "none of this material to the best of his (Haldeman's) recollection was identified by code name." (The information obtained from the wiretaps at Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate was put in a file labeled "Gemstone.")

Haldeman, who resigned April 30 as the White House chief of staff, testified again privately before the Watergate committee on June 14 and is scheduled to appear publicly before the committee later this summer.

Excerpts from a copy of a 20-page report of notes from the May 4 interview were published yesterday by The New York Times.

Although much of the testimony covers the same ground as a deposition

Haldeman gave in Watergate-related civil suits May 22-to-24, it does shed apparent new light on some of the political intelligence operations used in the Nixon campaign.

One agent for the Nixon re-election campaign was "Chapman's friend," Haldeman said. (Chapman conceivably could be a reference to President Nixon. Author Theodore H. White, in "The Making of the President 1968," describes Nixon registering Feb. 1, 1968, at a Nashua, N.H., Howard Johnson Inn under the name of "Mr. Benjamin Chapman.")

Haldeman, according to the May 4 report, said "Chapman's friend" was a "designation for a newspaper reporter who traveled at different times with different opposition candidates

during the primaries and then with (George) McGovern or (Sargent) Shriver during the general election and would phone in when there was any reason to, with a summary report on how the opposition campaign was going. He would get interviews with members of staff or even the candidates sometimes and then he would phone in reports as to what they were saying. He would describe mood of the campaign, etc."

On another spying aspect of the campaign, Haldeman said he never met Segretti. He said that Strachan or Chapin or both suggested during the summer of 1971 that a friend of theirs (Segretti) was getting out of the Army and was interested in carrying out the kinds of activities that Dick Tuck, a widely known political prankster, had done for the Democrats.

Haldeman said he agreed with Chapin or Strachan that financing of Segretti's activities should be worked out with Kalmbach, "and only raised the question with them that he (Segretti) should operate as totally independent of CRP or the national committee or the White House." Later, the report quotes Haldeman as saying, it would be "a better basis for him (Segretti) to be operating independently rather than tied to the campaign."

Haldeman qualified many of his responses, according to the report, by saying "to the best of my recollection," or "I don't believe" or "I don't recall." Seldom did he state flatly that he knew or did not know a certain thing.

(He also refused to answer some questions, citing "executive privilege." Since his May 4 testimony, the White House has changed its view of executive privilege and has authorized present and former aides to testify fully.)

For instance, the report quotes him as saying, "I don't believe I got any oral or written reports from Chapin or Strachan" regarding Segretti's activities. He also said "I don't believe Strachan ever talked to me" about the espionage activities of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.