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JAMES F. NEAL
... cover-up trial lawyer

Neal Rejoins Watergate Prosecution

Nashville lawyer James F. Neal has rejoined the Watergate prosecution force as chief trial lawyer in the coverup case against seven of President Nixon's former top aides and campaign advisers.

Neal, 44, returned to the staff Monday. Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski announced the appointment yesterday morning.

Once a leading Justice Department prosecutor who won the conviction of former Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa, Neal directed the Watergate investigation for five months last year before resigning to resume full-time law practice in Nashville.

Neal is returning to Jaworski's staff as a part-time consultant—the same status that he held under former Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox—so that he can continue his private law practice.

Former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and other defendants in the coverup case have challenged their indictment on the grounds that Neal's work last year violated Federal conflict-of-interest laws because he or his firm was still representing private clients in cases involving the Justice Department.

Neal's reassignment on the same basis indicates that Jaworski's office is not particularly concerned about the issue.

The Tennessee lawyer resigned from the Watergate force last Oct. 19 after obtaining a guilty plea that day from former White House counsel John W. Dean III for conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Jaworski also announced the appointment of Paul R. Michel as an assistant special prosecutor for the task force investigating presidential campaign contributions. Michel, 33, has been an assistant district attorney in Philadelphia since 1967. He directed a 19-month grand jury investigation of official corruption there involving alleged kickbacks, payoffs, conflicts of interest, and illegal police surveillance.