

Magruder Says Parkinson Tried

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

THE WASHINGTON POST Saturday, Nov. 2, 1974 A 7

Jeb Stuart Magruder charged at the Watergate cover-up trial yesterday that Washington lawyer Kenneth Wells Parkinson had tried to make him "a scapegoat" less than a month after the scandal broke.

Magruder said he didn't even realize it until yesterday morning as he came under intensive cross-examination. He said that he had thought Parkinson, a lawyer for the Nixon re-election committee, was just being "a friend" at the time.

But now, Magruder testified, he suddenly saw that Parkinson had been trying to set him up as a fall guy in the Watergate scandal when they chatted confidentially about Magruder's financial situation in the summer of 1972.

"I trusted Mr. Parkinson," the former deputy director of the Nixon campaign said angrily. "I'm a very open person . . . I now realize, only today, that it was a set-up conversation."

Fired up by the discovery, which he said came to him during a recess as he mulled over the question being put to him, Magruder staged a counterattack that completely overshadowed defense attempts to discredit him. Before the day was over, Parkinson's chief counsel, Jacob Stein, protested that Magruder was even starting to interrogate him.

The turnabout came in the midsts of Stein's efforts to depict Magruder as "a liar" with "sticky fingers" whose disclosures about the Watergate break-in were not to be believed.

Magruder said he told "the truth" to Parkinson at a meeting in Nixon campaign headquarters on July 13, 1972, shortly after Parkinson had been hired to defend the re-election committee against a Democratic lawsuit over the Watergate incident.

to Make Him 'Scapegoat'

Parkinson, however, then went to former Attorney General John N. Mitchell who, Stein said, dismissed Magruder as "a liar" whose own handling of Nixon campaign funds was highly suspected.

The 39-year-old Magruder said he later found that his disclosure to Parkinson had been denied by Mitchell as untrue. But he was unaware of the talk that he had "sticky fingers" until Stein began questioning him yesterday.

At first Magruder said he couldn't even recall discussing his financial situation when the two men got together a second time on July 15, 1972, ostensibly to discuss a formal statement that might be made to government investigators and ultimately to the Watergate grand jury.

But then, he testified, it all came back to him, along with the indignant realization that Parkinson had been trying to trap him. Ma-

gruder said he never reported the conversation to government prosecutors because, until yesterday, he had thought it so inconsequential.

Now serving a 10-month-to-4-year sentence for his role in the Watergate scandal, Magruder said he now remembered how he told Parkinson of his fears of being indicted.

"Then Ken, I assumed as a friend, discussed my financial situation," Magruder re-

called. "He said, 'How are you ever going to handle things?'"

According to Stein, Parkinson, one of the five defendants at the cover-up trial, took detailed notes, listing Magruder's estimated net worth at the time as \$150,000, including everything from a \$70,000 home to a \$5,000 cash value in his life insurance policy.

"Weren't you surprised

when Mr. Parkinson asked you the cash value of your life insurance?" Stein demanded.

"I was not surprised because I thought Mr. Parkinson was a friend and trying to help me," Magruder said in icy tones. "I maybe made the mistake of thinking Mr. Parkinson was a friend."

Stein kept trying to press the theme that Parkinson had a good reason for the fi-

nancial discussion—because of what Mitchell had reportedly told him. With Magruder out of the room at one point, the defense lawyer said Parkinson was really trying to find out whether Magruder had any Nixon campaign funds "stashed away."

Magruder angrily denied the suggestion when he returned to the stand. He has said he did eventually take

out \$7,000 from campaign funds for his own "self-preservation" but did not start doing so until the fall of 1972 when he first began worrying about being made "a scapegoat."

He said yesterday that it was evident to him from Stein's questioning that he should have started worrying earlier.

Magruder said he told Parkinson everything he knew about the Watergate break-in and the initial cover-up activities on July 13 when Nixon campaign aide Robert C. Mardian, a former assistant attorney general under Mitchell, brought the lawyer into Ma-

gruder's office.

"Mr. Mardian asked me to tell him (Parkinson) the truth," Magruder related. I said, 'Do you mean the real truth or the story we're working on?'"

Mardian, the jurors were told, responded, "No, I mean the truth. Mr. Mitchell wants you to tell him the truth."

Magruder said he then embarked on a rundown that lasted an hour to an hour and a half, telling Parkinson of Mitchell's ap-

proval of the Watergate bugging, White House interest in the spy work, the first successful break-in at the Democratic National headquarters here, the complaints that led to the second attempt and the hurried destruction of incriminating documents that followed the arrest of the intruders.

Mardian made some remarks from time to time but Parkinson "just took notes," Magruder recalled. "It was primarily a monologue on my part."

In his opening statement at the trial's outset Stein said that Parkinson subsequently destroyed the notes, but suggested that this was justified in the light of Mite-



Staff members of the Watergate special prosecutor's office pose for their official photograph in front of the United States District House here.

Associated Press