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Parkinson opens his defense

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kenneth W. Parkinson opened his defense at the Watergate coverup trial Tuesday by recalling a prosecution witness to testify he never told Parkinson all he knew about the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters.

Fred C. LaRue, a former Nixon campaign aide who was a key prosecution witness in the trial, testified that he was present when Parkinson was told that Jeb Stuart Magruder had been lying when he said the break-in had been sponsored by Nixon re-election committee officials.

LaRue said former Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell gave Parkinson "an out-and-out assurance that what Mr. Magruder had told Mr. Parkinson was not true."

"Did you have information that would have suggested Mr. Magruder's statement was true?" asked Jacob Stein, Parkinson's attorney.

"Yes," replied LaRue.

"Did you speak up?" asked Stein.

"No, sir," said LaRue.

LaRue also testified he could not recall Parkinson being included in any discussion of paying money to the Watergate break-in defendants.

"I can give no explanation as to why Mr. Parkinson was not included... It was limited to as few people as possible," he said.

"And you never told him about it?" asked Stein.

"Told him? No, sir," replied LaRue.

Parkinson was the last of the five defendants to present his defense at the trial, now in its 12th week.

Chief prosecutor James F. Neal said the prosecution expects to be finished by the end of the day Wednesday leaving only final arguments before the case goes to the jury.

Charged with Parkinson with conspiring to obstruct the investigation of the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in are Mitchell, former White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman and former assistant Atty. Gen. Robert C. Mardian.

During his testimony, Mardian also acknowledged he had been less than honest with Parkinson when he failed to tell him all he knew about the break-in.

Mardian said he gave Parkinson none of the details given him on June 21, 1972, four days after the break-in, by G. Gordon Liddy who had outlined his entire involvement.

Mardian also acknowledged telling Parkinson that the civil suits could be defended "on the basis that there was no connection between the Nixon committee and the burglars."