

Plumbers Trial To Begin Today

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WASHINGTON (AP) — John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's long-time right hand in domestic affairs, goes on trial with three convicted burglars Wednesday for a plot to steal a psychiatrist's records about Daniel Ellsberg.

Ehrlichman and the others are charged with a White House-bred conspiracy to violate the psychiatrist's rights by breaking into his office "without legal process, probable cause, search warrant or other lawful authority."

The jury trial is expected to last about a month. It is the second of three major trials in the Watergate aftermath involving men who were once in the Nixon high command. The least-known man in the case is the victim, Dr. Lewis J. Fielding of Beverly Hills, Calif.

Ehrlichman's co-defendants are G. Gordon Liddy, 43, the Watergate burglary master-

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who returned to law practice in Seattle after leaving the White House, also is charged with one count of lying to an FBI agent and three counts of making false statements to a federal grand jury.

For Ehrlichman, a defendant also in next September's Watergate cover-up conspiracy trial, conviction on all counts in this case could mean a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$50,000 fine. For the others the maximum on the conspiracy count is 10 years and \$10,000.

The case's beginning was three years ago this week when the New York Times began publishing The "Pentagon Papers," a series of articles based on a secret Pentagon study of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war.

Soon afterward, it became known that the papers were copied and distributed by Daniel Ellsberg, a scholar who had been a consultant with the Rand Corp. "think-tank" in Santa Monica, Calif.

"It posed a threat so grave as to require extraordinary actions," President Nixon was to say later. "I approved the creation of a Special Investigation Unit within the White House which later came to be known as the Plumbers. This was a small group at the White House whose principal purpose was to stop security leaks ... I looked to John Ehrlichman for the supervision of this group."

Ehrlichman's assistant, Egil

Krogh, was put in charge. David Young, a member of Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff, was added. So were Liddy, then a presidential staff assistant, and E. Howard Hunt Jr., a consultant.

Charles W. Colson, a special counsel to the President, re-

calls the high degree of alarm expressed by both the President and Kissinger at leaks of national security matters.

The President, he said, told him in effect at the end of June 1971 "I don't give a damn how it is done, do whatever has to be done to stop these leaks and

prevent further unauthorized disclosures."

The defendants claim they were acting in the name of national security.

But U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell, who will preside at the trial, has ruled out a national security defense.