

6 Senators, Seldom in Spotlight, Emerging Into Prominence in Watergate Inquiry

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 1 — The Senate's select committee that is investigating the Watergate affair, which is likely to occupy the center stage of national politics for the rest of the year, is composed of a group of Senators who have rarely been in the spotlight.

Only one of the seven men — Sam J. Ervin Jr., the chairman — has a national reputation as a politician.

But, in the past, congressional investigations have often led relatively obscure legislators into the glare of national publicity and set them on the road to prominence and political power.

Richard M. Nixon first made national news as a young Representative from Southern California investigating alleged Communist influence in the government.

Harry S. Truman was a little known Midwestern Senator before he became chairman of a special committee to investigate the national defense program during World War II.

Estes Kefauver, Joseph R. McCarthy and Gerald P. Nye are others who first gained fame or notoriety from Senate investigations.

Not Widely Known

The six Senators who are serving under Mr. Ervin — Herman E. Talmadge, Daniel K. Inouye and Joseph M. Montoya, who are Democrats, and Howard H. Baker Jr., Lowell P. Weicker Jr. and Edward J. Gurney, the Republicans — are scarcely the Senators who make the galleries rustle with recognition when they walk onto the Senate floor.

In the case of the Democrats, at least, their relative anonymity seems to be the principal reason they were selected for the committee by Senator Ervin with the approval of Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate Democratic leader.

"We could have gotten the fist-pounding, free-wheeling boys out there," Senator Mansfield said in an interview. "I don't know what that would have accomplished. We're not looking for a TV melodrama. We're looking for a good, fair, impartial investigation."

A Senate aide familiar with the selection process gave a slightly different explanation of how Senators Talmadge, Inouye and Montoya were picked: "First, they eliminated the freshmen. Then they eliminated the potential Presidential candidates — Kennedy, Mondale, Humphrey, Bayh and the rest — because they were afraid these guys would give the committee a partisan image. Once they set these ground rules, there weren't too many Democrats to choose from."

The Well Known

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

is from Massachusetts, Senator Walter F. Mondale is from Minnesota, as is Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, and Senator Birch

As for the Republicans, Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the minority leader, discussed the committee membership with other members of the leadership.

"Senator Baker," he said later, "was on everyone's list. He's a good lawyer, a good interrogator and in the middle of the road ideologically."

Senators Gurney and Weicker asked to be on the committee and, since they were the only Republicans to do so, they were given the assignment.

What follows is a brief look at the seven Senators on the panel — the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities — who are likely to have their names on the front pages and their faces on the television screens regularly in the months to come.

SAM J. ERVIN JR.

In the running tug-of-war this year between Congress and the White House, Senator Ervin seems to be holding the rope at the east end of Pennsylvania Avenue on virtually every issue. It is his bill that seeks to limit the President's power to impound funds and his committees that are looking into the questions of newsmen's right to withhold their sources of information and the President's right to withhold information and staff members from Congressional scrutiny. It is also, his colleagues emphasize, his committee that is investigating the Watergate affair.

It is not coincidental that all these tasks should fall on the ample shoulders of the Democrat from North Carolina. In 18 years in the Senate, he has sided at times with the conservatives and at times with the liberals, but he has gained the respect of virtually all of his colleagues for his unswerving principles and his dedication to the Constitution.

"Sammy is the only man we could have picked out on either side who'd have the respect of the Senate as a whole," Senator Mansfield said.

At the age of 76, Mr. Ervin is the third oldest man in the Senate (George D. Aiken of Vermont and John L. McClellan of Arkansas are older.) But he was 58 when he first came to the Senate and had a full career as a lawyer and judge. Except for three years at Harvard Law School and two years as a Representative in the 1940's, he had spent his entire life in North Carolina.

HERMAN E. TALMADGE
Senator Talmadge of Georgia

is one of the quiet powers in the Senate. As chairman of the Agriculture Committee and ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee, his authority is exceeded by few other Senators. But Mr. Talmadge prefers to do his work behind the scenes rather than in open committee or floor sessions.

Mr. Talmadge is 59 years old. His father, Eugene, was the colorful, tempestuous Governor of Georgia for three terms, but Herman Talmadge is no carbon copy of his father.

His colleagues regard him as one of the smartest men in the Senate, and he is respected for his deep, professional knowledge of a wide range of issues. He is studious and has few interests outside of his Senate duties.

When Senator Mansfield called and asked Senator Talmadge to be on the Watergate committee, he begged off.

"I told him I had more pressing business," but he said he wanted me. When you're asked like that by the leadership, you pretty much go along," he recalled.

Unlike some other members of the committee, Senator Talmadge said he planned to do no housework on the Watergate investigation but to depend on committee hearings for all his information.

"I see myself as a juror," he said, "and a juror doesn't background himself."

DANIEL K. INOUYE

Senator Inouye was a protege of two famous Texans — former President Lyndon B. Johnson and former Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. He is now a favorite of Senator Mansfield, and many of his colleagues believe that Mr. Inouye, now an assistant Democratic whip, wants to be a majority leader himself some day.

Handsome and urbane, Mr. Inouye, 48 years old, is enormously popular in his home state, Hawaii. He was a World War II hero who lost his right arm while serving as an Army captain during the Italian campaign. After graduating from law school, he went back to Hawaii and went into politics. He was represented Hawaii and went into politics. He has represented Hawaii in Washington since the islands became a state, as a member of the House for two terms and as a Senator since 1962. In 1968, he was re-elected with 83 per cent of the vote.

Politically, Mr. Inouye is moderate to liberal. He supported Mr. Johnson's unsuccessful Presidential campaign in

1960, even giving a seconding speech for him at the Democratic convention.

JOSEPH M. MONTOYA

Mr. Montoya, a member of one of New Mexico's most prominent families, has held an elective office since he was 21 years old, serving in both houses of the state legislature, in the United States House of Representatives for four terms and in the Senate since 1964. But, at the age of 57, he is not widely known outside his home state, and even there he must campaign constantly to maintain his office. In 1970, he received barely 52 per cent of the vote in his re-election campaign.

Mr. Montoya concentrates his Senate activities on tending to the needs of his constituents in New Mexico. He has a solid liberal voting record on domestic issues and was an early opponent of the war in Vietnam.

He became concerned last year about the Government's use of wiretaps. He had several private meetings with Senator Ervin on the subject. He said he believed that these meetings

led to his appointment to the Watergate committee.

HOWARD H. BAKER JR.

Senator Baker, the ranking Republican on the committee, is 47 years old but looks 10 years younger. With a boyish face, a quick grin, a soft voice and a relaxed manner, he may be able to use the televised committee hearings to build a base of national political support.

"We couldn't have picked a better man," a fellow Republican said recently. "Howard has the best television personality in the Senate."

The Tennessee Senator was born into politics. His father was a member of the House for 13 years and his mother filled out his unexpired term. His sister, May, is married to Representative William C. Wampler of Virginia, and his wife, Joy, is the daughter of Everett McKinley Dirksen, the late Senate Republican leader.

He said he was assured by the Republican leadership before he accepted his position on the Watergate panel that he would not be expected to take a partisan line or take orders from the White House.

EDWARD J. GURNEY

Last year, Senator Gurney acknowledged, he was the chief defender of the Nixon Administration during the Judiciary Committee's investigation of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

"It was such a highly partisan investigation," he said. "Someone had to play the role of de-

fending the President, and I did."

But he said that he was the Watergate inquiry as a different matter.

"I want to see that it is as nonpartisan as possible, but I certainly want to bring out every last piece of information," he said.

Senator Gurney, a conservative, was elected in 1968 as the first Republican Senator from Florida since Reconstruction. A native of Maine and a graduate of the Harvard Law School, he moved to Florida and went into law practice in 1948. Now 59 years old, he served three terms in the House before moving on to the Senate.

Mr. Gurney said he had asked to be on the Watergate committee because "investigative work is my favorite kind of Senate work."

LOWELL P. WEICKER JR.

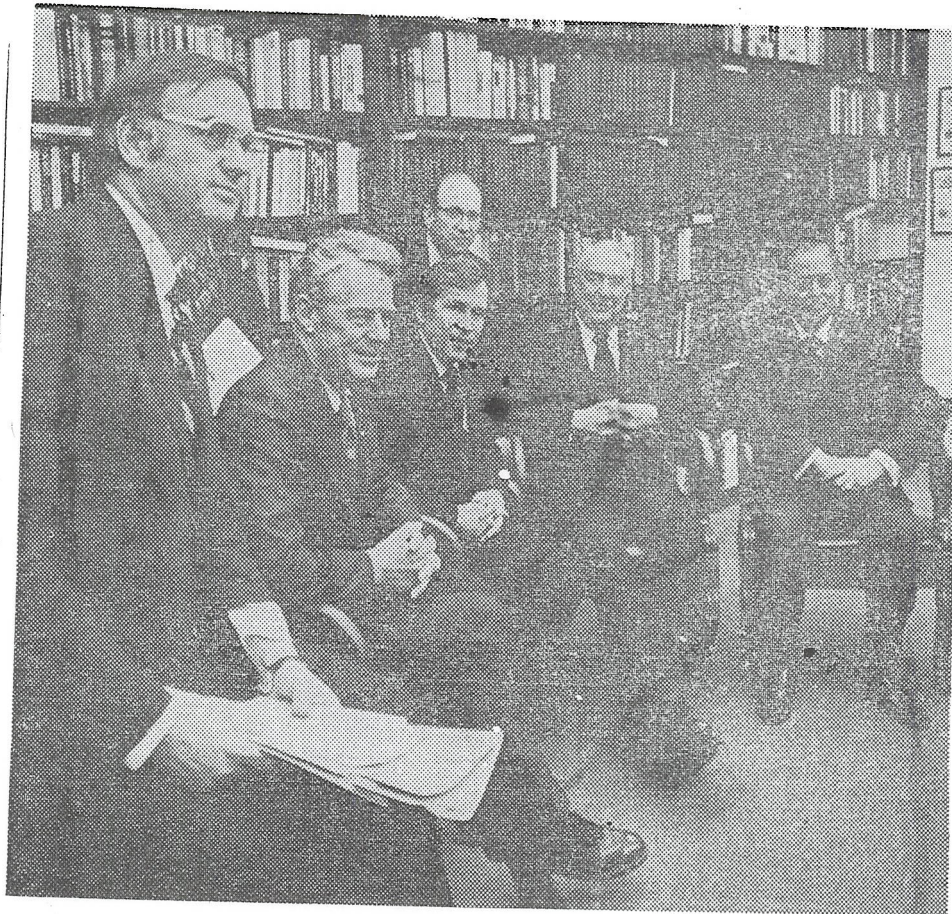
When Senator Weicker told a news conference last week that he believed that the blame for the Watergate affair went deep inside the White House, it was not the first time the Connecticut Republican had taken a stance against President Nixon.

He has taken a liberal position on most domestic legislation—against proposals to limit busing for school desegregation, for increased Federal aid for mass transit and against building a supersonic airplane. But, after campaigning in 1970 on an antiwar platform, he defended Mr. Nixon's policies during the Cambodian invasion.

The son of a wealthy industrialist, Senator Weicker, now 41 years old, attended the Lawrenceville School, Yale University and the University of Virginia Law School. He served one term in the House before being elected to the Senate in 1970.

In explaining why he sought membership on the Watergate committee, he said:

"I'm a professional politician. Because of things like the Watergate, people have lost faith in politicians, and I want to see that changed. The only thing that will convince them to respect politicians is to bring dirty business like the Watergate out in the open."



The New York Times/George Tames

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., second from right, chairman of the Senate committee investigating the Watergate case. With him are four of his six committee members. They are, from left: Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Connecticut Republican; Edward J. Gurney, Florida Republican; Howard H. Baker Jr., Tennessee Republican; and Joseph M. Montoya, New Mexico Democrat. Missing are Herman E. Talmadge and Daniel K. Inouye, Democrats of Georgia and Hawaii, respectively. Behind Mr. Baker is Samuel Dash, general counsel.