

In Britain, the Big Story of the

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London, April 23—Britain's press and broadcasters have been splashing the Watergate scandal with the loving care it would usually reserve for an axe murder at 10 Downing Street.

Both the highbrow and lowbrow newspapers have been running reams of copy on page one and other choice spots, richly illustrated with photographs of President Nixon, former Attorney General John Mitchell, White House aide H. R. Haldeman and others whose names have come up in connection with the case. During much of this long Easter weekend, the latest revelation from Washington has been the first or sec-

ond item on BBC newscasts.

This morning, the story got featured treatment in every published national newspaper except the Times, which ran only a modest, 11 inch story well inside. But that prestigious organ on Saturday spread the tale over six columns on top of page one, headlining "15 White House Officials Expected to Quit as Watergate Scandal Grows."

A common theme in most accounts is that the affair has reached Mr. Nixon himself. The conservative Daily Mail's correspondent says "the smell of the Watergate scandal's bad eggs" is "extending all the way to Key Biscayne" where the President is resting. The popular Mirror devotes its entire center spread to the affair

under a boxcar type headline shouting, "The Taint of Guilt Moves Closer to Nixon." Its New York reporter says: "Nixon has not earned the name 'Tricky Dicky' for nothing."

Worst Scandal

Ross Mark of the Daily Express, another top paper, insists that under a parliamentary system, "The Nixon administration would certainly fall." On Sunday, the conservative Telegraph, normally a staunch supporter of the U.S. President, describes the scandal as "probably the worst that has ever struck an American administration."

The British press is displaying an almost savage contempt for the Nixon aides involved. Simon Winchester of The

Guardian reels off the preponderance of German names and calls them the "Teutons Macoutes," a double pun referring to the "Iontons Macoutes," the thugs around Haiti's late President Francois Duvalier.

Many commentators have been struck with what columnist Ron Akass in The Sun calls the White House aides' "scramble for safety, scratching at each other's eyes." His biting account of "the mud" on President Nixon's "face" appears under a six-column cartoon of a perspiring Mr. Nixon. The Telegraph, too, reports "a frantic scramble among White House officials to tell all and save their own necks."

It is the essential simplicity of the story line, as well as the

Day Is Watergate Scandal

grand figures involved, that have made the affair such a star turn here. The papers and the BBC have no trouble sorting out the main points—spying and sabotage against the opposition party, then coverup on a massive scale, all allegedly directed by those in charge of the nation's law enforcement.

Winning Yarn

The quick pace of new disclosures, each one appearing to bring the affair closer to Mr. Nixon's own office, have also made this a winning yarn.

The three prestigious Sunday papers, The Observer, the Sunday Times and Sunday Telegraph, all had long and sober accounts of the story thus far. Perhaps the most stylish was Michael Davie's article

that filled the front page of The Observer's review section.

He set Watergate against the scandals over milk, wheat, ITT and financier Robert L. Vesco, concluding that the famous "orderliness of the White House begins to look less orderly."

Davie found the roots of all this in the dominance of White House men molded by the manner of Orange County, Cal. He described it as: "new, fast-growing, white, intensely orthodox, patriotic, church-going, often Puritanical, often rootless, often heavily mortgaged, and often fearful that something unpredictable may happen—factory closures, space agency cutback, tax increases—to put the citizens on a slide that will put them back

into the ranks of the poor from which many of their parents escaped."

"In Orange County terms, people are either regular, striving Americans, or bums, or enemies . . . arrogance, too much money pouring in from suspect sources, a lack of any tradition to fall back on, amateurism, and an Orange County-style belief that any methods were justified in order to defeat enemies and Democrats; these may turn out to be the links between the orderliness of the administration and the disorderliness of the conspiracy."

Like other British reporters, Davie generously praises the American press for pursuing the scandal and, especially, The Washington Post.