

White House. Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to the President, told FBI agents of several "panic sessions" prompted by publication of the Pentagon papers and other confidential information. Colson, the political hand who first recommended Hunt for the plumbers' team, also said that he had been ordered three times to keep mum about the Ellsberg break-in—twice by Ehrlichman and once by former White House counsel John W. Dean III. They called it "a national-security matter of the highest classification," he said.

Colson disclaimed knowledge of any other illegal activities, but his name kept coming up in connection with a variety of operations, from espionage directed against the Democratic Presidential contenders to a phony newspaper ad supporting the President's mining of Haiphong Harbor. In testimony before the Watergate grand jury—released last week by Judge Byrne—Howard Hunt said Colson had ordered him to falsify the cables linking JFK and Diem. And the story he told had a wealth of persuasive detail.

**'He Seemed to Like Them'**

Hunt was given access to some 240 cables from the State Department's classified "back channel" and then went to work with "the very meager means at my disposal . . . a Xerox machine in the White House, a razor blade and a typewriter." The process was "relatively simple," he said. "From many of these cables I could pretty well adjust the text to the type of language that would be used by the man who was the ostensible originator . . . I was satisfied that I had two creditable cables . . . I showed them to Colson. He seemed to like them."

The practical CIA experience of Hunt and most of the other Watergate conspirators came in handy at almost every turn—and in the end was nearly used to pin the blame for the Watergate break-in and bugging squarely on the CIA itself. James W. McCord, another agency veteran, told Federal investigators that he came under intense pretrial pressure to go along with a defense contention that Watergate had been an authorized CIA operation. Lawyers involved in the case denied the pressure, but confirmed that such a defense was considered; it would have relied on the agency's normal reluctance to comment one way or another on such affairs. But McCord said he refused to play along: "I would not turn on the organization that had employed me for nineteen years, and wrongly deal such a damaging blow that it would take years for it to recover . . ."

Considering all the week's developments, the CIA may have done that very disservice to itself long before Watergate—when it first agreed to help Hunt. The taint from Watergate and the Ellsberg case, said one agency source, has "literally wiped away half a decade's effort to improve our image." The same could be said by the FBI and a lot of other people at the very top.

# A Talk With John Dean

He was the President's own prized whiz kid, a Brooks Brothers Galahad with a choirboy's grin and an infallible formula for pleasing the boss: "To get along," he told his friends, "you go along." But with the mire of Watergate sucking around him, John Wesley Dean III, 34, is finding the going sticky indeed. His attempts to fend off criminal penalties for his own role in the Watergate cover-up have dropped him from Nixonian grace. He says he is willing to accuse palace guards H.R. (Bob) Haldeman and John Ehrlichman—and even to suggest that the President himself was aware of the cover-up—if he is promised immunity from prosecution. But his bid to join the

"an ongoing effort to limit or prevent" his testifying freely before the Federal grand jury. Then he surfaced briefly after days of hiding for a two-hour interview with NEWSWEEK's John Lindsay to repeat his original charges. "I never thought this would be easy," he said. "I knew what I was doing, and I think the whole story must be told or it won't have been worth it . . . I did not scare easily then. I won't scare easily now."

In the NEWSWEEK interview, Dean's story was limited: he would answer few questions that might be asked under oath in a future court case. But speaking calmly and smiling occasionally at his chic second wife, Maureen, 28, Dean



Wally McNamee—Newsweek



Marlette—Charlotte Observer

The Deans: 'I knew what I was doing . . . the story must be told'

Watergate hounds may take more skill than he can muster. "I'm the man in the middle," he observed last week. "It is not a comfortable position."

That was an understatement. Sen. Sam Ervin and his team of Senate investigators said last week they were eager to listen to Dean and were willing to offer him immunity in return. But Federal investigators let it be known that they were less than impressed with Dean's story and far from ready to grant him immunity before the Federal grand jury investigating the case. Stepping up the heat, the White House issued a denial of Dean's charge, reported in NEWSWEEK, that Haldeman and the President had congratulated him for "keeping the lid" on the Watergate scandal last September, and that Ehrlichman had arranged an offer of executive clemency to keep Waterbugger E. Howard Hunt quiet later in the year.

To counter this threat to his bargaining position, Dean issued a blistering public statement that he was the victim of

underlined a central charge in his original story: that he had never produced the report that Mr. Nixon cited last August as clearing the White House top staff of any complicity in the Watergate scandal.

Dean himself, he said, was on a trip to California at the time. "The first I heard of the 'Dean report' was on the 'Big Two News' at 6 o'clock in my motel room on Aug. 29," he said evenly. "I had had no opportunity whatsoever to discuss this matter with the President. I had no phone conversations, nothing. I was flabbergasted. I had been out strolling—almost strolled up to San Clemente, in fact, where there was supposed to be a press briefing. I dropped in to see a friend and then I went back to my motel. I was getting ready to leave my room when the news broadcast came up. Here was the President of the United States reassuring the American people on the basis of a report that didn't exist."

After that, Dean said, "I started thinking. I became very suspicious about it

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all." Curiously enough, however, the focus of his suspicion was not on the cover-up, but on his own potential role as patsy: "I asked myself, what was the motive behind throwing out my name at that time? Why, I wondered, a 'Dean report'?"

#### 'Poor Pat Gray'

And while Dean would not discuss what happened next, he seemed ready to offer at least tentative solidarity with anyone whose testimony has damaged the Administration. "Poor Pat Gray," he said. "He took a terrible beating. I would like to have testified on his behalf." At Gray's disastrous confirmation hearings for the permanent post of FBI director, Dean was barred from testifying under his own guidelines on executive privilege. But he told Lindsay last week: "I just wish they had sent the questions to me. I would have been happy to have answered them under oath. I think it would have helped Pat Gray."

While Dean did not budge an inch from his angry charge that the real blame for the Watergate cover-up should not rest on his well-tailored shoulders alone, his story remained transparently designed to enhance his bid for immunity. And he was encouraged to speak out again only after Federal investigators started leaking reports to newsmen that cast doubt on his value as a pivotal witness whose testimony would be needed to hook bigger fish in the White House. Dean hadn't enough solid information to be worth trading for his immunity, one Federal investigator told NEWSWEEK's Stephan Leshner: "You can't go to court on his impressions of what he thought the President knew."

For his part, Dean attributed his low rating with the Justice Department to more sinister motives. "I have learned from several good friends that there is a concerted effort to 'get me'," he said in a statement released through his attorney. "Blatant efforts have been made to publicly intimidate me." He declined to say who the political hit men were, but Dean made it perfectly clear that he believed that Federal investigators were willing to sacrifice their chances of buttoning up a case against Haldeman and Ehrlichman—and conceivably even the President—in their eagerness to punish Dean.

#### 'Plenty of Time'

The Justice Department's hint that it would stall the Senate's immunity request for Dean also puzzled Ervin and touched off some squabbling between the Federal and Senate investigating teams. Ervin argued pointedly that even if Dean were granted immunity before his Senate committee, the Federal investigators had had plenty of time to pile up enough independent evidence to proceed with indictments in the Watergate case. "The FBI, the Department of Justice, the attorneys assigned to the prosecution have supposedly been studying this case since

last summer," he observed tartly. "If they can't show enough evidence to convict people by this time they maybe ought to go out of business."

It was not the first time that Dean had found himself at the center of a White House crisis. "I was used as a fire fighter," he told Lindsay. "Once the fire had started, or a potential fire had started, I was sent in to put it out. It ran the gamut—everything, every issue. Fire fighting was the least pleasurable and often the most time-consuming part of that job." Among other blazes Dean said he had attended to was the 1971 bungle in which the White House unleashed the FBI to investigate CBS newsmen Daniel Schorr, who was often critical of the Nixon Administration. When word of the probe got out, the White House lamely claimed that Schorr was merely being checked out for a White House appointment. "That was typical of the type of razzle-dazzle they are able to put together," Dean shrugged. "I'm not sure how many people believed that official story, but I'm certain that Daniel Schorr does not."

#### A Good Move

Dean had strong credentials for this kind of work. "He had refrigerant blood," one former associate recalled last week. But even his fiercest critics concede that Dean brought to the White House a quick mind and boyish charm. When Dean left the Justice Department in 1970 to work at the White House, says outgoing Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, "I cried." But it was a good move for Dean; he quickly improved his position with the President, becoming the house expert on the pocket veto, Presidential impoundment of appropriations and—understandably enough—executive privilege.

As the Watergate scandal ripened, however, the pressures on Dean intensified. "He's become an old man very quickly," notes Barry Goldwater Jr., Dean's classmate at the Staunton Military Academy in Virginia and best man at his second wedding. Reporters digging into Dean's past discovered that he had been fired from his first job after graduating from Georgetown Law School—for "unethical conduct" in a conflict with his boss over an application for a television-station license in St. Louis. (After Dean took up his White House post, the angry superior discreetly softened his description of the episode to "a basic disagreement" over firm policies.)

These days, Dean's little Porsche no longer sits in the garage of his trim town house in Alexandria, Va.; the blinds are drawn against the TV crews and photographers camped outside, and the potted evergreens are dying on the front stoop. "I told Mo just before we were married last October that I knew this story was going to break," Dean told Lindsay. "I said it would be rough, but to hang on and we'd ride it out." "I didn't really believe it would be this rough," Maureen said. But John Dean had already drawn the rueful moral for a friend, just before he went into hiding. "They throw some pretty big rocks in this town," he said.

#### WOUNDED KNEE:

#### Not With a Bang . . .

Seventy lengthening days after it began, the so-called Second Battle of Wounded Knee faded away last week, leaving a shattered and vandalized village, two Indians dead and one FBI agent paralyzed, and a pervasive inconclusiveness about what had been accom-



After the pullout: Promises, bravado, debris—and no winners