



The phone booth on Route 355 ^{AP}

which included Daniel Ellsberg on a sort of busman's holiday. Even so, there were surprising nuggets in the evidence of the very first witness, Robert Odle, 29, CRP's earnest young office manager. After lingering over an organizational chart of CRP, Odle was asked who really ran the show. He conceded that the White House pulled most of the strings. He said he spoke two or three times a week with Gordon Strachan, an aide to Presidential chief of staff H.R. (Bob) Haldean.

'That Could Never Happen Here'

Then Odle proceeded to pin down John Mitchell in what appeared to be a lie. He said that Mitchell began to play a major part in the campaign decisions as early as May 1971. This contradicted sworn testimony by Mitchell before a Senate committee investigating the ITT affair last year. Mitchell had declared under oath that, before resigning as Attorney General on March 1, 1972, he had no "party responsibilities." Specifically, he denied taking part in the selection of a site for the national convention. Said Odle: "Major campaign decisions" were cleared with Mitchell.

Odle's testimony ran on and on, and soon Dash's grand strategy was in shreds. Inouye, followed closely by Gurney and Weicker, launched Odle into a vivid reconstruction of events at CRP on the day of the Watergate break-in last June 17. Odle recalled that, when he first learned of the burg-

NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Caulfield: A friendly arm-twister ^{UPI}

lary, he had no idea of the identity of the arrested men. "I said, 'That could never happen here, because I have this guy working for me named Jim McCord...'" The audience broke up. Odle also described Gordon Liddy asking directions to the office's "big" paper shredder (CRP had two sizes). Odle pointed it out, and Liddy asked: "How do you work it?" Odle: "You press the button." Liddy later pressed the button on a foot-high stack of documents.

Odle himself had been busy that day. Sometime in the afternoon, he said, he and colleague Robert Reisner held a phone conversation with Magruder, who was in California. Magruder, according to Odle, instructed them to remove from his office an armload of confidential files.

The reason, Odle professed, was that CRP's security chief, McCord, was in jail, and in his absence someone might try to swipe the papers. Reisner stuffed his briefcase with files, and gave Odle a single folder from Magruder's cache. Odle described it to the committee as a "strategy" file and admitted to suspecting later that it contained "things which have no place in a political campaign." But in the grand tradition of L. Patrick Gray, Odle maintained that he had not read the file. It sat in a closet at home, he said, and on the next Monday he returned it to Magruder.

Treasure Chest

Other things that supposedly have no place in a political campaign haunted the Republicans and will surely crop up in the hearings. Late last week, the Government Accounting Office released its strongest attack yet on GOP funding irregularities. GAO charged, among other things, that Herbert W. Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer until recently, secretly raised at least \$210,000 that went "through intermediaries to the Watergate defendants or their attorneys." The agency also deduced that CRP had raked in \$1.7 million in unreported cash prior to April 7, 1972, when the new disclosure law took effect, "in addition to a larger total received in checks or securities." Of that sum, \$900,000 was disbursed to officials "in an obvious attempt to evade the disclosure requirements." GAO said that \$199,000 of the money found its way to Liddy.

Understandably, the first two days of the Ervin hearings raised more questions about Watergate and the cover-up than they settled. It may be a while before the really big names come forward to provide (or refuse to provide) some

THE MITCHELLS SPEAK UP

Like everyone else, John and Martha Mitchell watched the first two days of televised Watergate hearings last week, and the strain was taking its toll. Martha Mitchell emerged once briefly, from her Fifth Avenue apartment to talk urgently—if somewhat disjointedly—with a pack of newsmen about James W. McCord's stunning testimony. "You can place all the blame right on the White House," she said vehemently. "Where do you think all this originated? Do you think my husband's that stupid? Whom do you think he's protecting? ... Mr. President," that's who.

Late that night, she followed up with another of her famous calls to UPI reporter Helen Thomas to repeat her charge that the White House was setting her husband up as the "fall guy." The President, she

warned, should resign "or he'll be impeached—I think he'd be much wiser to resign."

At that, the former Attorney General himself took the phone away—but not, this time, to hang up. Mitchell repeated his wife's warning that even though "somebody has tried to make me the fall guy ... it isn't going to work."

That was a theme that Mitchell repeated last week in talks with friends—and he had cause for concern. Senate investigative sources told NEWSWEEK they have concluded that a White House group led by former top aide John D. Ehrlichman has in fact been preparing to place responsibility for the Watergate bugging and cover-up on former counsel John Dean III



Bernard Gotfryd—Newsweek

answers. The panel granted John Dean immunity last week, but the law permits the Justice Department to delay his appearance for as long as 30 days, and so far there was no sign that the privilege would be waived. (When Dean does appear, however, the celebrated documents he had stored in a safe-deposit box will also be on hand; Judge Sirica ordered them turned over to the committee last week.) Other superstars—Mitchell, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Magruder and CRP finance director Maurice Stans, Mitchell's co-defendant in the Vesco case—come later on Sam Dash's meticulous schedule.

This week, however, should still provide ample grist for the Watergate mill. After McCord and Caulfield testify, former CIA director Richard Helms, now U.S. ambassador to Iran, may be squeezed in to tell how Haldeman and Ehrlichman tried to use the CIA in the cover-up, and he is said to be ready to testify that he was led to believe the President knew what they were up to. Next on the agenda is Hunt, and the committee will try to get from him evidence linking former Presidential counsel Charles Colson to the CIA matter. Gordon Liddy will follow; he may well give the committee its first dose of the Fifth Amendment.

Also on tap, perhaps for this week, are such small fry as Reisner and Liddy's secretary, Sally Harmony. The parade of the famous, the near-famous and the potentially infamous will probably keep the Ervin committee plugging away at its four-day-a-week pace well into the summer and quite possibly into the fall. If last week's beginning is any guide at all, Watergate will be hanging over Richard Nixon's head for months to come—and perhaps forever.

and Mitchell himself. The Ehrlichman group charted this strategy, these sources said, when it was realized that Waterbugger James McCord was not going along with the cover-up "game plan."

Mitchell's response, as relayed by his friends, was as self-serving as the stories told by other Watergate figures. He resents what he sees as a plot to smear him. His friends say the plot included pressure from Washington to make sure he was indicted for his role in the Vesco case before he appeared at the Ervin hearings. Still, Senate investigators expect that his and Dean's testimony will be damaging to Ehrlichman "and others."

Mitchell says, however, that he will never implicate the President, and he doubts that Dean has the evidence to pin the cover-up on Mr. Nixon either. "This was not the President's doing," Mitchell told NEWSWEEK's Hal Bruno last week. "None of it."

Thinking the Unthinkable

No, said the White House press secretary, the President did not intend to resign.

That the question could be asked at all was a measure of rising national readiness to think the unthinkable; that Ron Ziegler felt obliged to answer it seriously was a gauge of punctured White House aplomb. "The President of the United States has a lot to do and a lot to accomplish in his second term," Ziegler declared, "and he fully intends to do just that." But the question kept coming back from the reporters assembled at the daily White House news briefing one day last week: Wasn't the pressure for resignation steadily increasing? Did the President still regard the 1972 election as a genuine mandate? Ziegler soldiered on without a hint of retreat: "He was elected to lead this country as President in 1972, and that he intends to do." In six short months, a huge victory had become a legal crutch for a crippled President.

Richard Nixon was doing his best to present an unruffled face to the world, but all over the nation Americans were asking the same tough questions as the newsmen in the White House press room. According to a nationwide survey of NEWSWEEK bureaus last week, very few citizens believe, on present evidence, that Mr. Nixon should resign or be impeached. But quite a number are at least beginning to contemplate that stark possibility, and many sense that his covenant with the electorate has suffered damage that cannot be repaired.

"I can't bring myself to conclude he ought to be impeached," said a politician on the coast. "But I'm beginning to think he ought to consider resigning." In Massachusetts, the proud heartland of anti-Nixonism, "Impeachment With Honor" bumper stickers blossomed on the highways. The prevailing mood seemed to be not so much outrage as a suspicion that the President had not told the full story of Watergate, a concern that the nation would have to muddle ahead three more years with a Chief Executive who had lost much of his respect and influence.

"How's Nixon going to bargain with Brezhnev with this hanging over his head?" asked one Illinois county farm agent. The remainder of the Nixon Administration, predicted Prof. William Lammers, head of the University of Southern California's political science department, will be a "rancorous stalemate, sprinkled with wrenches and lurches as finally a last-minute action is taken out

of dire necessity." One GOP campaign manager thought the prospect of Spiro Agnew would keep Democrats from pushing Mr. Nixon over the rim. "You've got to think of the country," he said. "To rip the thing threadbare may not be best. It's like living with a relative who's got a drinking problem. You keep quiet."

Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater, a conservative whose conscience has overridden a long-standing personal friendship with Mr. Nixon, decided it was time to speak up. "It is not an easy thing for me to say this about my country or my President," he declared, "but I think the time has come when someone must say to



Haynie—Louisville Courier-Journal
 "... WHAT Watergate cover-up ... ?"

both of them: 'Let's get going.' We are witnessing the loss of confidence in America's ability to govern . . . I urge my President to start making moves in the direction of leadership which have suffered from lack of attention because of an understandable concern about Watergate."

A Chins-Up Speech

Back in Washington, Mr. Nixon was all business-as-usual. He pointedly declined to watch the Watergate hearings on television ("He doesn't even have a set in his office," said Ziegler), though his new chief of staff, Gen. Alexander Haig, was sending him a daily summary of the transcript. The Brezhnev visit remained firmly on track, and on the domestic front the President met with Treasury Secretary George Shultz and his newly Republican adviser John Connally to dis-