Gray Changes Story on Files

Washington

L. Patrick Gray III changed his story yesterday and said he had examined files removed from the safe of a key member of the Watergate conspiracy before burning them with his Christmas trash.

The former acting director of the FBI, who had earlier said that he destroyed the documents without reading them, contended before the Senate Watergate committee that the papers had not been "evidence in the case."

He said, however, that his acceptance of the papers taken from the White House safe of E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of seven men sentenced in the Watergate break-in, constituted "a grievous misjudgment."

Gray largely confined his testimony to two aspects of the Watergate controversy: his handling of the files and the "confusion" over the covert activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Among Gray's points in a 51-page prepared statement were these:

- The FBI waited two weeks, at the suggestion of White House and CIA officials, to interview two key witnesses on the handling of \$114,000 in Nixon campaign funds involved in the Watergate break-in.
- President Nixon was informed by Gray on July 6, 1972, that "people on your staff are trying to mortally wound you by using the CIA and FBI and by confusing the question of CIA interest in, or not in, people the FBI wishes to interview."
- The President's only response to this, after "a slight pause," was to instruct Gray to "continue to conduct your aggressive and thorough investigation."

Previous testimony by Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, differed in some respects with Gray's recollection of events.

Walters, who preceded Gray at the committee's witness table yesterday, testified that when he first went to Gray on June 23 he had indicated that he had left a meeting at the White House.

1973

Walters and Richard

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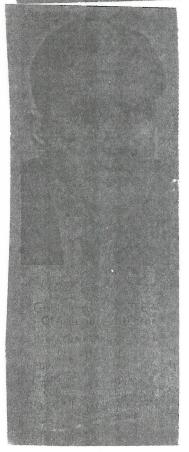
the doubt in my send that dissruction was intended.

The clear implication of the substance and tons of their remarks was that these two flies were to be destroyed, and i interpresent this to be an order from the counsel to the President of the United States issued in the presence of one of the two top assistants to the President of the United States."

After keeping the files in his Washington apartment and his otice safe Gray said he took them to his home in Stanington Coan.

"I distinctly recall that I burned filem during Christmas week with the Chrimas and household papetrash," he said.

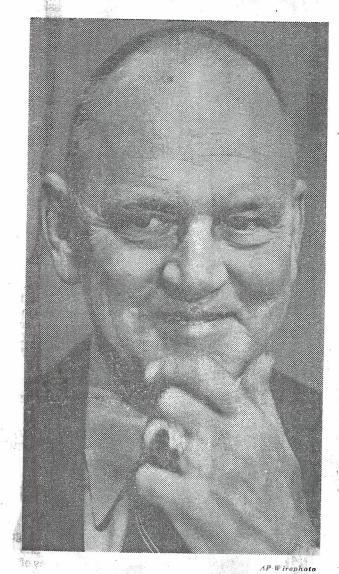
"Immediately before put







New Version



L. PATRICK GRAY III TESTIFIED

He said he did look at files before burning them