

# Another Celebrity Emerges From the Watergate Case

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A STRANGE legal quirk has unexpectedly revealed the key role played by a Yugoslav refugee in the Watergate case.

The foreman of the Watergate grand jury is a good-looking intellectual, 46-year-old Vladimir Nicholas Pregelj (pronounced "praygl").

After toiling anonymously for 16 years in the recesses of the Library of Congress, "Miro" — as Pregelj's friends call him — has suddenly emerged as a Watergate celebrity whose life may never be the same.

He and 22 fellow jurors became known July 27, when they made an unprecedented open court appearance at the judge's request and voted a motion requiring President Nixon to "show cause" for not releasing his tapes.

The grand jury is expected to make more headlines in coming months by handing down indictments, added to its earlier seven which

resulted in convictions and jailings.

Pregelj appeared a little out of character at 7:30 a.m. recently when he answered his doorbell barefoot and wearing a faded blue bathrobe.

The hefty six-footer, with graying dark hair over his square, bearded face, invited his caller inside, but was careful about giving information.

In closed sessions, he and his fellow jurors extracted the sensational Watergate story long before it exploded on the nation's television screens.

He has been under a heavy strain because of his double work load. The grand jury sessions are protracted, irregularly spaced, and often called on short notice. At the same time he faces demanding deadlines for Congressional research in his \$25,000-a-year job as an economist specializing in East-West trade.

To catch up on the ever-

mounting backlog, Pregelj pops into his office nights and weekends.

He was born in the Slovene capital of Ljubljana, where his mother still resides.

Apparently unsympathetic to the Communist regime of Marshal Tito, Miro left his native land, served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957, became an American citizen, and earned B.A. and M.A. degrees at St. Joseph College in Indiana and Fordham University in New York, respectively.

He went to work at the Library of Congress in 1957 and never married.

Pregelj is well regarded at the Joint Economic Committee of Congress for his work in editing and co-ordinating a 1970 study on Soviet economic and military problems.

Colleagues describe Pregelj as "thorough and dedicated. He's serious at work, but can be witty and humorous."