

Buchanan Rejected Probe Of Ellsberg—It Was Bad Idea

By Peter A. Jay

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White House aide Patrick J. Buchanan told the Senate select Watergate committee yesterday he was asked to oversee a 1971 White House investigation of Daniel Ellsberg but turned down the assignment because he considered it a bad idea.

He rejected the idea in July, 1971, he told the committee, and told presidential assistant John D. Ehrlichman in a memorandum, "I not only did not want to undertake it myself but did not see the value of (anyone else) doing so."

The request for an investigation came shortly after Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times. Buchanan said that his own recommendation had been that President Nixon deliver a national address urging The Times and The Washington Post—which also obtained portions of the classified papers—not to publish them.

On the theory that it would be better to "argue this thing out on principle on the front pages" rather than seeking derogatory information about Ellsberg to leak to friendly columnists, Buchanan said, he wrote a speech for the President. The speech never mentioned Ellsberg, he said, and was never delivered.

About two months after Buchanan declined Ehrlichman's request that he investigate Ellsberg, members of the secret White House unit called "the plumbers" broke into the Los Angeles office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

Buchanan said he knew

nothing of the secret investigation unit or the break-in until he read about them in a news magazine and a wire service dispatch much later.

E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the convicted Watergate burglars who was also a member of the "plumbers" unit, told the committee earlier this week that the Sept. 3, 1971, break-in was intended to produce information that could be used against Ellsberg.

David Young, a former White House aide who was the second-in-command of the "plumbers," used the name of Henry A. Kissinger—the new Secretary of State—in trying to secure information about Ellsberg from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Senate committee has been told.

An affidavit given the committee by Dr. Bernard M. Malloy, a CIA psychiatrist, quoted Young as telling him that Kissinger and Ehrlichman—then presidential assistants—wanted the CIA to provide a psychiatric profile of Ellsberg that could render him "ineffective." A profile was eventually prepared, sent back by the White House for revision, and finally filed away unused.

Kissinger said yesterday in New York that if Young used his name it was without his knowledge. "I never saw this profile," he said. "I never discussed the subject with David Young and therefore, if my name was used, which I cannot affirm, it was used without authority."

Buchanan told the committee that when the Ells-

berg assignment was offered him by Ehrlichman (and, at the same time, by former White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and former special presidential counsel Charles W. Colson) he did not believe he was being asked to do anything "illicit or unethical or wrong."

He turned it down because it would be "a waste of my time and abilities" and bad tactics besides, Buchanan said.

He put these reasons in a memorandum to Ehrlichman, he said, adding that he is scheduled to talk about that memorandum today "to the grand jury"—presumably the federal grand jury here that is currently investigating the Ellsberg break-in and other matters.

The committee does not have the memorandum, chief counsel Sam Dash said. Buchanan said it is still in the White House, and that he intends to review it before he testifies before the grand jury.