

MacGregor Scheduled To Testify

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Former Nixon campaign manager Clark MacGregor, whose testimony could help determine whether President Nixon was aware of the Watergate cover-up at an early date, is scheduled to appear today before the Senate select Watergate committee.

MacGregor has in no way been implicated in the Watergate cover-up, but, in his deposition in a Watergate civil suit and in comments to The Washington Post in August, his version of certain key events is at odds with statements by Mr. Nixon, former top presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman and former acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III. For example:

- MacGregor disputes sworn testimony by Gray and Ehrlichman that he urged President Nixon to call Gray after Gray called him on July 6, 1972, with a warning that the Watergate affair could hurt the President.

- MacGregor, now a vice president of the United Aircraft Corp., also disputes Mr. Nixon's press conference statement of Aug. 29, 1972, that MacGregor "has continued that investigation (of Watergate) and is continuing it now" within the re-election committee. Mr. Nixon also said at a press conference last Aug. 22 that MacGregor "told me that he would conduct a very thorough investigation as far as his entire committee staff was concerned."

MacGregor in his civil suit deposition, said that he conducted no investigation, but rather merely asked officials at the Committee for the Re-election of the President if he could rely on their public statements that they and others at the re-election committee had "no involvement in or foreknowledge of" the Watergate break-in.

Of more importance perhaps are the differing versions of events of July 6, 1972, for it was in the conversation on that date between Mr. Nixon and Gray in which Gray testified he warned Mr. Nixon that some of his top aides were trying

to "mortally wound" him by trying to involve the CIA in the Watergate probe.

Gray said Mr. Nixon's call to him came just 37 minutes after he (Gray) had called MacGregor and warned him that the activities of certain White House aides "could be wounding" to the President.

Mr. Nixon, in his May 23 public statement on Watergate, said he called Gray from San Clemente on July 6, 1972 "to congratulate him on the successful handling of" a hijacking the previous day.

Mr. Nixon added, "During the conversation Mr. Gray discussed with me the progress of the Watergate investigation, and I asked him whether he had talked to Gen. (Vernon) Walters (for the CIA). Mr. Gray said that he had, and that Gen. Walters had assured him that the CIA was not involved. In the discussion, Mr. Gray suggested that the matter of Watergate might lead higher. I told him to press ahead with the investigation."

Mr. Nixon elaborated on this at his Aug. 22 press conference, saying he wanted to get assurances from Gray that the CIA was not somehow involved in the Watergate affair. Mr. Nixon made no mention of who, if anyone, prompted him to call Gray.

Mr. Nixon also said he does not recall Gray saying Presidential aides were trying to "mortally wound" him but concedes "he could have said that."

MacGregor denied to The Post in August that he asked Mr. Nixon to call Gray. He said he did not even mention his conversation with Gray to Mr. Nixon. Also, MacGregor contended he talked to Gray late on the night of July 5, and not in the morning of July 6, as Gray contends.

FBI logs show Gray spoke to MacGregor on July 6 at 10:51 a.m. Washington time (7:51 California time). The logs also show the call from Mr. Nixon to Gray came 37 minutes after a conversation between Gray and MacGregor.

Ehrlichman, in testimony just released by the Special Intelligence Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, said last May that Mr. Nixon had called Gray as a result of "MacGregor's conveying a request from Gray to the President." Ehrlichman also characterized MacGregor as providing "strong urging" to Mr. Nixon to call Gray.

Attempts by The Post to reach MacGregor yesterday and Tuesday for comment on Ehrlichman's just-released testimony were unsuccessful.