

WXPost DEC 8 1973

Nixon Ex-Aide Chapin Offers Not Guilty Plea

By George Lardner Jr.
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Dwight L. Chapin, saying he has no regrets about his work at the White House, pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges of lying to a federal grand jury.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell released him on his own recognizance and tentatively set Chapin's trial for Feb. 19.

President Nixon's former appointments secretary, Chapin, 33, was indicted last week in connection with a grand jury investigation of political espionage during the 1972 Nixon re-election campaign.

He told reporters after his arraignment that he was confident of being vindicated, but declined to discuss the charges against him.

"I think I'm a person of integrity," Chapin said.

A dark-haired young executive now on leave from his job at United Air Lines, Chapin reportedly recruited political saboteur Donald H. Segretti in 1971 for secret assignments aimed at promoting Mr. Nixon's re-election.

The former White House aide was accused of lying under oath four times last spring during questioning before the Watergate grand jury about Segretti's activities.

Segretti himself is serving six months in prison for violating federal election laws during the 1972 Florida presidential primary. He has agreed to cooperate with Watergate Special Prosecutors in their so-called "dirty tricks" investigation.

Chapin's lawyer, Jacob A. Stein, said he would seek to have the indictment against his client dismissed "because of prejudicial pre-trial publicity" and would at least try to have the trial transferred from Washington.

Stein said he may also challenge the composition of the indicting grand jury, which was named last August to supplement the work of the original Watergate jury.

Judge Gesell ordered the motions filed by Jan. 9.

Meanwhile, Gesell told Watergate prosecutors to submit the August grand jury's transcripts involving Chapin to the court within

the next week. The judge said Chapin ought to have them—except perhaps for any portions that should clearly be kept confidential.

"Since he claims bias in the grand jury, he's entitled to see the minutes," Gesell said.

Watergate Assistant Special Prosecutor Richard J. Davis protested that some of the grand jury testimony "relates to potential witnesses," but Gesell pointed out that Chapin was entitled to know who the witnesses against him will be anyway.

Chapin, who now lives in Winnetka, Ill., faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine on each of the four counts against him.



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

White House ex-aide Chapin after arraignment in court.