

More Work Looms in the Future For 23 Weary Watergate Jurors

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Three days a week, on the average, over the past 21 months, the 10 men and 13 women of the Watergate grand jury have filed into their windowless beige-walled hearing room in U. S. District Court here to listen to the tangled testimony of White House crime.

Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with an occasional Friday thrown in, the jurors have forsaken their regular jobs and daily routine to serve as footsoldiers in the legal armies warring over the fate of a president and his men.

Yesterday, the jurors returned their major findings to date: sufficient evidence of crime exists to bring seven of the President's closest former advisers to trial on charges that included conspiracy, perjury and obstruction of justice.

Because they are sworn to secrecy, almost nothing is known of the deliberations of the jurors over the past months.

Those who have seen them come and go describe a low-key collection of inner city residents, most of them black and over 40, living together from six to nine hours a day and gradually accumulating in their hearing room the coffee mugs and experiences of a portion of life shared together.

These grand jurors were sworn June 5, 1972 — 12 days before the break-in at Democratic headquarters — for what was assumed to be routine investigative duty in the District Court system.

As the tides of Watergate ebbed and flowed, they took up other cases and returned

other indictments but ultimately Watergate consumed all their jury time. Special legislation was passed by Congress to extend their term beyond the 18-month expiration.

The grand jury's function is two-fold: to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to prosecute a person or persons for alleged crimes, and to safeguard individuals from arbitrary or malicious prosecutions brought by the government.

Although grand juries have vast powers to initiate action on their own and to exclude prosecutors from their hearings, the panels generally are directed in their inquiries by a prosecutor.

Witnesses may consult their attorney outside the hearing room before answering a question, but may not have counsel inside and have no right to cross-examination.

The grand jury that returned the seven indictments yesterday has been unusual in two respects:

The length of its service has far surpassed the 30-to-60-day stints normally served by U.S. District Court grand juries and all persons it indicted testified in person before it.

In more typical cases, the investigations and suspicions of the grand jury are kept totally secret from the suspect, lest their disclosure trigger flight or destruction of evidence.

Grand jurors generally are paid from \$20 to \$25 a day by the government for their service. Government employees, like 11 of the Watergate jurors, draw their regular pay for jury

duty instead of the fee and some private employers make up the difference between a juror's regular salary and his jury fee.

Jurors in private business or the professions, however, have at times complained that the small fee works a hardship on them and ultimately leads to an under representation in the jury box from the business management sector of the community.

In addition to the jury that returned indictments yesterday, there are two other grand juries investigating other aspects of the Watergate scandals. Two jurors have resigned from reasons of hardship from one of these juries.

And even after 21 months the jurors who acted yesterday are not yet finished. After receiving their indictments, Judge Sirica ordered them to remain publicly silent about what they had heard and wait to be called again.

They would, he said, have more work yet to do on Watergate.