

Former Nixon In Cover-up of

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Aides Indicted Watergate Case

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

A federal grand jury yesterday indicted seven of President Nixon's former White House and campaign aides, including H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, and John Mitchell, for covering up the Watergate scandal.

The conspiracy is still going on, the grand jury charged. The grand jurors delivered the explosive indictment in U.S. District Court here along with a sealed "report and recommendation" evidently dealing with the President himself.

Seven men in all were accused of trying to block the Watergate investigation with lies to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to the grand jury and with the payment of hush money to the original Watergate defendants.

The others charged in the cover-up are former White House special counsel Charles W. Colson; former White House aide Gordon Strachan, former Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian, and Kenneth W. Parkinson, an attorney for the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

The grand jury indicted them for conspiring with others "known and unknown" from the day the break-in and

bugging at Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office building was discovered "up to and including the date of the filing of this indictment."

The charges, climaxing a 20-month investigation, were handed up to U.S. District Court Chief Judge John J. Sirica at a brief but tense 15-minute session at the federal courthouse here. Dozens of spectators lined the corridor outside Sirica's courtroom, but reporters took up most of the seats inside.

The White House responded with a brief statement in which the President expressed the wish that the country "will join him in recognizing that those indicted are presumed innocent unless proof of guilt is established in the courts."

More indictments are expected—probably next week—in connection with the activities of the so-called White House "plumbers," specifically their role in the 1971 break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

The indictment and the sealed report were given to Sirica by grand jury foreman Vladimir N. Pregelj. Watergate prosecutors handed the judge a second briefcase, which was locked, containing documents alluded to in the sealed report. They apparently deal with Mr. Nixon.

Sirica opened the envelope containing the short, sealed

report; read it to himself, and announced that he would take custody of it "until further order of this court." He showed no sign of surprise at whatever it said.

The judge ended the session with a sweeping gag order prohibiting even the defendants from making any public statements about the case. He also made plain that he intends to try it himself and scheduled arraignments for next Saturday, March 9.

The grand jury returned 24 charges against the seven men. All are felonies carrying maximum prison terms of five years each but varying fines ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

The individual charges are:

- Mitchell—one count of conspiracy, one count of obstruction of justice, two counts of lying to a grand jury, one count of perjury before the Senate Watergate committee and one count of lying to the FBI.

- Haldeman—one count of conspiracy, one count of obstruction of justice and three counts of perjury before the Senate Watergate committee.

- Ehrlichman—one count of conspiracy, one count of obstruction of justice, one count of lying to the FBI and two counts of lying to a grand jury.

- Strachan—one count of conspiracy, one count of ob-

struction of justice and one count of lying to a grand jury.

- Colson—one count of conspiracy and one count of obstruction of justice.

- Parkinson—one count of conspiracy and one count of obstruction of justice.

- Mardian—one count of conspiracy.

Listing 45 overt acts in the course of the cover-up, the grand jury said that "it was a part of the conspiracy that the conspirators would corruptly influence, obstruct and impede, and corruptly endeavor to influence, obstruct and impede, the due administration of justice" in the Watergate bugging case, both to conceal those responsible for it and to prevent the disclosure of other illegal activities.

The indictment said the plot included the destruction of documents, attempts to get money from the Central Intelligence Agency for the original Watergate defendants and offers of "leniency, executive clemency and other benefits" for conspirators E. Howard Hunt Jr., G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord Jr. as well as for Jeb Stuart

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him." Colson taped the conversation and gave up the recording to Dean, the indictment says. According to the grand jury, Dean played it for Ehrlichman and Haldeman at the President's retreat at Camp David, Md., on Nov. 15 and took it to New York the same day for Mitchell to hear it.

Colson has insisted that Hunt was "not specific" about what he wanted in the phone call, but the grand jury charged that Colson's turning the recording over to Dean was in furtherance of the cover-up.

With the first Watergate trial fast approaching, the grand jury said that Parkinson turned up at the White House on Dec. 1 and gave Dean "a list of anticipated expenses of the defendants during the trial."

Haldeman, the indictment says, subsequently approved using part of a \$350,000 cash fund he controlled. The grand jury said Trachan gave \$350,000 to LaRue in two installments. The indictment indicates that LaRue eventually delivered the biggest portion — \$175,000 in four installments — to Hunt's lawyer, Bittman.

The first Watergate trial began before Judge Sirica on Jan. 8, 1973, and within a few days, Hunt and the four men from Miami whom he recruited for the burglary had pleaded guilty. Meanwhile, the grand jury said, LaRue arranged in mid-January for delivery of \$20,000 to Liddy. Mitchell allegedly told Dean that same month to have an intermediary,

John C. Caulfield "give an assurance of executive clemency" to McCord, former security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-election of the President who had been caught in Democratic headquarters with the Miamians.

The trial ended Jan. 30, but the payments to Hunt continued, the indictment says, and so did his demands.

According to the grand jury, Hunt met with Nixon campaign committee lawyer Paul O'Brien on March 16, 1973, and demanded another \$120,000.

The word was passed to the White House and it eventually came up at the March 21 meeting of Mr. Nixon, Haldeman and Dean.

In his account of the session, Haldeman told the Senate Watergate committee last summer: "He (Dean) also reported on a current Hunt blackmail threat. He said Hunt was demanding \$120,000 or else he would tell about the seamy things he had done for Ehrlichman." Hunt had been a member of the White House "plumbers" squad which Ehrlichman helped organize in 1971).

By all accounts of the session, the President finally asked how much money would be involved over the years and Dean said, "probably a million dollars."

According to Haldeman's testimony, "the President said, 'There is no problem in raising a million dollars, we can do that, but it would be wrong.'"

Underlining those words in the indictment, the grand

jury said that Haldeman "well knew" they "were false."

Haldeman had also insisted in his Senate Watergate testimony that he had listened to the tape of the meeting and that he had heard the President say those words on the recording "with my own ears, yes."

Again underlining those words, the grand jury said Haldeman well knew that this, too, was false.

The stiffest charges in the indictment were lodged against Mitchell, who was named in six counts, and against Haldeman and Ehrlichman, who were named in five counts each. Currently on trial in New York on other charges, the 60-year-old former Attorney General was accused of lying to the FBI in July of 1972, of lying to the Watergate grand jury in September of 1972 and again in April of 1973, and of perjuring himself before the Senate Watergate committee in July of 1973.

Questioned first by FBI agents, on July 5, 1972, Mitchell was charged with making "false, fictitious and fraudulent statements" in telling them "that he had no knowledge of the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters"—except for what he had read in the newspapers.

Ehrlichman was charged with lying to the FBI and later to the grand jury where he repeatedly testified, "I'm sorry but I just don't remember . . . I'm sorry but I just don't know" when asked when he had learned of Liddy's involve-

ment in the Watergate break-in.

Predicting a "long and protracted" trial, Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski said it could last as long as three or four months.

Judge Sirica set arraignments for next Saturday because of Mitchell's trial schedule in New York. In a cryptic announcement that seemed to underscore the grand jury's charge of a continuing cover-up, Sirica also told the 21 members present that their long work was not yet done. He said they might be called back to the courthouse "in about two weeks."

The judge gave no indication of what he intends to do with the sealed report about Mr. Nixon, but there has been speculation that Sirica might send it to the House Judiciary Committee for its impeachment inquiry.

The report itself, which Sirica read before resealing it, seemed to consist of only a few pages. But the locked olive-colored briefcase that Assistant Watergate Prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste submitted as a supplement appeared to be crammed full. The judge has the key.

U.S. Cutback in Japan

Agence France-Presse

TOKYO, March 1 — The headquarters of U.S. forces in Japan announced today that it would discharge 427 Japanese employees at nearby Sagami supply depot and other military installations.