

What Prison Taught Krogh

Washington

Egil Krogh Jr., the former head of the White House "plumbers" unit, returned home from prison yesterday and said his experience had given him a new insight into the importance of individual rights.

"I found out how important it is to respect each individual's rights," Krogh told a group of reporters waiting at his suburban Washington home.

Krogh declined to discuss the Watergate case, saying he is under a court order not to talk of the incident. But he said he felt the incident had had a good effect on the nation.

"The trials, the convictions, the sentences, all are just a small part of coming to grips with what this country means," he said, "and that's a good thing."

Krogh said Watergate had forced people in public life to decide what is right.

"I'm not sure if you asked everyone what is right that you would come up with the same answers," he said. "But at least the question now will be asked."

Asked if he would repeat the actions that led to his conviction, Krogh said, "I would do it differently. I would certainly not engage

in anything that was stupid, unlawful or illegal."

Krogh pleaded guilty November 30 to a single count of conspiracy to violate the rights of Dr. Lewis Fielding, the psychiatrist who had treated Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg.

Fielding's office was burglarized Sept. 3, 1971, by four men who reportedly were seeking information that could be used against Ellsberg in connection with the Pentagon Papers case.

Krogh was sentenced to two to six years in prison but all but six months of that time was suspended. He served four months and 17 days before he was paroled.

Krogh, who faces potential disbarment proceedings in

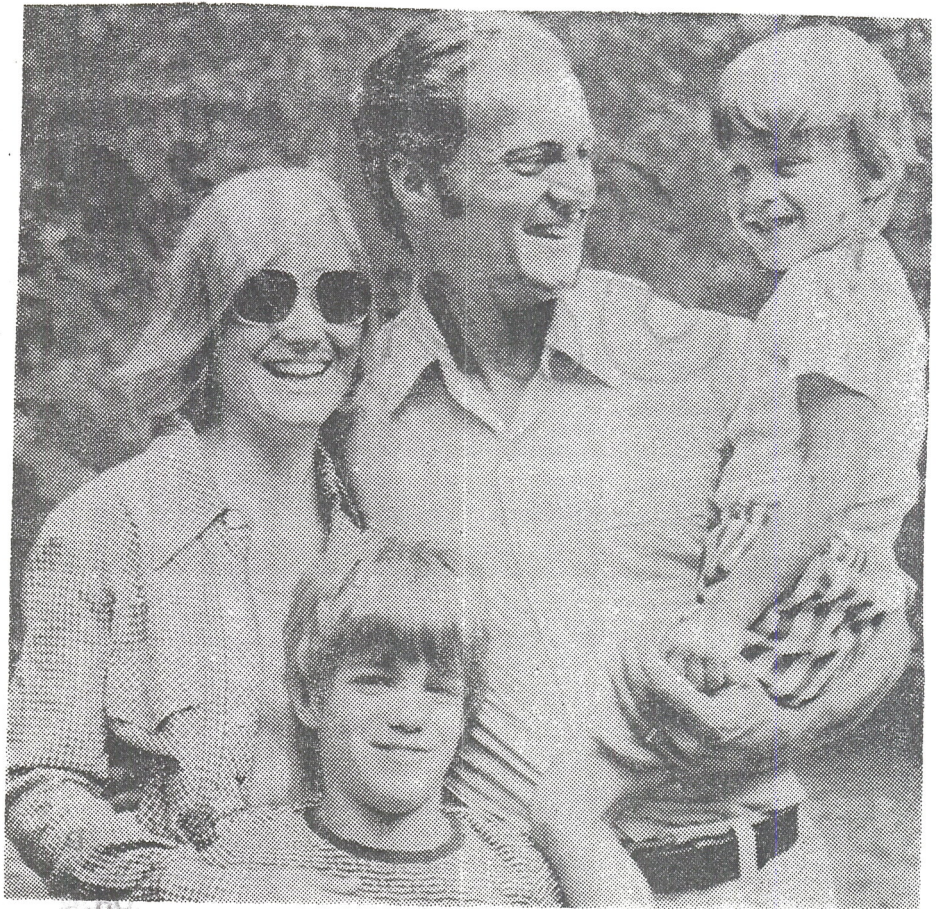
his home state of Washington, said he has no firm plans for the future other than to relax and take a short vacation.

"I'm more or less regrouping," he said. "I don't know what we will do yet. I'm just playing it a day at a time, which is the way you get through prison."

Krogh said his experiences at the Allenwood minimum security prison (near Lewisburg, Pa.) were not painful but also were not easy.

"I made a lot of friends. I learned a lot about farming that I never knew before. I found out how much I rely on my family and friends," he said.

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Back from prison, Egil Krogh was greeted by his wife, Sue, and sons Matthew, 4 (right) and Peter, 8.

AP Wirephoto