

Plumbers' Chief Names Ehrlichman

Washington

David R. Young Jr., co-director of the White House Plumbers, testified yesterday that John D. Ehrlichman removed three sensitive documents about the Ellsberg break-in and told him that if the case became public knowledge "we'll just have to button up, hunker down."

Young, testifying under immunity from prosecution and in public for the first time, described in detail his private meetings with Ehrlichman, then President Nixon's top domestic adviser, on March 27 and April 30, 1973.

Ehrlichman, whom Mr. Nixon had placed in overall charge of the Plumbers special investigative unit, and three others are on trial in U.S. District Court for conspiring to violate the rights of Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, who was the psychoanalyst for Pentagon Papers defend

Back Page Col. 5

From Page 1

ant Daniel Ellsberg. Fielding's office was burglarized in 1971.

Young said Ehrlichman initialed his approval on an Aug. 11, 1971, memo for a "covert operation" to get medical files in the Plumbers' attempt to get incriminating information about Ellsberg, who had leaked the Pentagon Papers on the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Young said that at Ehrlichman's request he sent a briefcase of Ellsberg files to him March 26, 1973. A day later, Young went to Ehrlichman's office.

"Ehrlichman said, 'my present recollection is that I didn't know about this (break-in) until afterwards,'" Young, a lawyer and former personal assistant to Henry A. Kissinger, testified.

"My clear recollection is that you also knew about it—the memos in the files in the briefcase reflect that you did," Young said he replied.

"I have taken those out because they were too sensi-

tive and showed too much forethought," Young quoted Ehrlichman. "I said, 'well, someone else might have a copy,' and he said, 'That's a chance we'll have to take.'

"I asked what we would do—the public posture—if it broke publicly. He said 'it was not dissimilar to a national security wiretap, and while no one likes that sort of thing, this was undertaken in the national security interest. We'll just have to button up, hunker down, and not consider questions publicly'."

Young testified that he had made Xerox copies of the three sensitive originals before placing the originals in the briefcase to go to Ehrlichman.

Later, he discovered these three originals were missing.

The three documents were a CIA psychological profile on Ellsberg and memos to Ehrlichman dated August 11 and 27.

About three weeks after that meeting, the break-in was disclosed and a judge dismissed charges against Ellsberg during his California trial. A few days later, on April 30, 1973, the day

Ehrlichman resigned, Young testified he met with him again.

"He said early on (in the conversation) that the President was aware of the whole matter, and that it was clearly a national security matter within the mandate of national security," Young testified.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell asked Young whether he meant "the President was aware of (Plumbers co-director Egil (Bud) Krogh's position, or something broader than that."

"I was referring to something broader than that, a reference to the whole project," Young testified.

Young said Ehrlichman told him that he, Ehrlichman, "would be vindicated eventually."

"Using a football analogy, he was going to throw a block for the President," Young said, adding that Ehrlichman told him Mr. Nixon had spoken to Attorney General nominee Elliot L. Richardson about the matter "and made it clear it was a national security matter."

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DAVID YOUNG JR.
Ellsberg documents