



STEPHEN BULL

AP Wirephotos  
LARRY HIGBY

Aides aren't getting financial help from White House.

## Watergate Costs

# They're Drowning In Legal Fees

### Washington

Larry Higby still has a White House job and a \$28,000-plus annual salary. He also has about \$10,000 in Watergate-related legal bills.

Higby, 29, is among a dozen middle-level White House aides who have run up lawyer fees during the Watergate investigations. Some say their legal expenses run close to \$20,000; for others, the expense has been as low as \$50.

They have not been accused of any wrongdoing. And as far as is known, they have not been targets of a grand jury.

But one by one, they have been summoned to testify, either by the Senate Watergate committee of the Special Watergate Prosecution Force. Usually, the investigators want to know what they remember about the activities of others.

And the fear of being sucked into the swirling scandal has prompted them to obtain private counsel. Some said they have testified 20 times or more.

"Because of the political climate in Washington resulting from Watergate and because you're being interrogated by an aggressive prosecutor's staff with almost unlimited resources, you'd be crazy not to get a lawyer," said a White House aide who reported that his own legal bills amount to \$2000.

"Your reputation is on the line, and if that's ruined, there goes your career."

President Nixon has a staff of 17 lawyers to defend him against Watergate-related charges. They are paid by the government.

Left-over campaign money has been used to pay the massive legal bills of some former officials of the now-defunct Committee for the Re-election of the President.

But the White House aides must shoulder their legal expenses themselves.

Many said they are unsure how they will pay them.

Some said they have dipped into their savings accounts. Others are considering soliciting contributions to set up a trust fund. One said he has taken out a bank loan. Another said he may take a second mortgage on his house.

One may borrow from his in-laws.

Higby, who was a top aide to former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, has been questioned about his ex-boss's alleged involvement in the Watergate cover-up. Some sessions lasted five or six hours.

Another aide, Stephen Bull, said his legal bills are approaching \$20,000 a year. The White House refused to disclose the exact amount.

He is one of three people to have had access to the presidential tapes at the time the 18½-minute gap was discovered.

"I've got to figure out some way to come up with the money," said Bull, who is married and has two small daughters. "If it were \$3000, I'd worry more because I could handle it. But this, it might as well be a quarter of a million."

Another former presidential aide, who asked to remain anonymous "because I've had heartache enough without my name coming up again," said his legal expenses are approaching \$15,

000, and he sees no end to them.

He has another job in the administration, but much of his time is spent working with his lawyers on the various Watergate-related suits that name him.

"I'm trying hard to make a go of this job," he said. "The bills are a burden. I may have to borrow from my parents or my wife's parents. I'm numb to it now."

Former campaign committee officials have been more fortunate than the White House aides. The 1972 campaign Liquidation Trust, successor to the re-election committee, paid \$396,421 from its campaign surplus for a platoon of defense lawyers representing former chief fund raiser Maurice H. Stans.

Ex-campaign chief John N. Mitchell, who was tried and acquitted with Stans in the Vesco conspiracy case in New York, may have some of his monumental legal bills taken care of by the trust as well. But he also faces trial in the upcoming Watergate coverup case, and conviction could disqualify him from legal funds for that defense.

And the trust paid more than \$15,000 in legal fees for former campaign treasurer Hugh W. Sloan, who quit the re-election committee shortly after the break-in at the Democratic headquarters. Eventually Sloan was given immunity and not charged.

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