

Ford Appointees Checked By Watergate Prosecutor

NYTimes

By PHILIP SHABECOFF SEP 27 1974

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26—The special Watergate prosecutor, at the request of the White House, is investigating many of President Ford's appointments to high office to assure that they are not tainted by the Watergate scandal, officials close to the investigation disclosed today.

Among those checked out by the staff of the special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, was Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mr. Ford's Vice President-designate, these officials said. They indicated that the staff had found nothing detrimental to report to the President about Mr. Rockefeller.

Mr. Rockefeller's name was sent to the special prosecutor along with those of four or five other candidates that Mr. Ford was considering for the Vice-

Presidential spot in August.

When asked about the process of clearing appointments through Mr. Jaworski's office, a White House spokesman confirmed that it was being done, but said that not all of Mr. Ford's appointees were being investigated by the special prosecutor.

The spokesman explained that everyone being considered for an appointment in the White House or other major executive-branch jobs was routinely checked out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that that practice had been followed by past administrations.

Only if the F.B.I. investigation unearths some evidence warranting a further check on pos-

Continued on Page 26, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

sible links to the Watergate scandal is the special prosecutor's office asked to conduct an investigation of its own, the spokesman said.

One presidential appointment investigated by Mr. Jaworski, the spokesman added, was Mr. Ford's recent nomination of Peter M. Flanigan as Ambassador to Spain. Mr. Flanigan had been in the White House through almost all the tenure of the Nixon Administration, most recently as executive director of the Council on International Economic Policy.

Nomination Went Through

Mr. Jaworski's office presumably found nothing unfavorable to report on Mr. Flanigan, since Mr. Ford went ahead and announced the nomination.

The White House spokesman would mention no other names. However, one official close to the Watergate investigation said that a number of prospective Ford appointees had been investigated, and even now several were being checked out.

The official did not suggest that the investigations had uncovered evidence linking any of President Ford's appointees with the Watergate case.

Apparently the fact that a prospective White House ap-

pointee was connected in any way with the Nixon Administration or with Mr. Nixon's 1972 election campaign is regarded as sufficient reason to have Mr. Jaworski's office as well as the F.B.I. look in. This would indicate that Mr. Ford and his advisers remain sensitive to any hint of a continued White House link to the Watergate case, and that they take pains to insure against any Nixon Administration skeletons popping out of White House closets.

The Becker Case

Recently questions have been raised about one man President Ford designated to perform a task for him, although the questions did not involve Watergate.

Mr. Ford had Benton L. Becker, a Washington lawyer, act as his intermediary with Mr. Nixon on the negotiations involving the pardon for the former President and the disposition of the Nixon tapes and documents.

At the time, Mr. Becker was being investigated by the United States Attorney's office on tax-fraud charges. Mr. Becker had not been appointed to a White House post, but was serving on a volunteer basis. Therefore he was not investigated.