

Dean Tells Court About the Coverup

First Witness Describes Defendants' Activity After the Break-In

Washington

John W. Dean III led off the government's case in the Watergate coverup trial yesterday with 3½ hours of testimony that strongly implicated four of the five defendants.

Dean, once counsel to President Nixon and now a federal inmate because of his own role in the Watergate affair, testified that John D. Ehrlichman had told him to destroy evidence.

He said also that he had been informed by an aide to H. R. Haldeman that Haldeman had also ordered the destruction of evidence.

He told the jury that John N. Mitchell, a third defendant, and Robert C. Mardian, a fourth, had taken part in devising a story that could explain the transfer of \$200,000 in campaign funds to one of the Watergate burglars.

Dean, sitting with his shoulders hunched and his face somber, told the jury much more — especially about Ehrlichman, who among other things, he said, had ordered him to pressure the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency into assisting the original Watergate burglars.

Dean testified in response to questions by James F. Neal, the assistant special prosecutor in charge of the case for the prosecution.

He testified over repeated objections by defense counsel, nearly all of whose objections were overruled — sometimes after angry squabbles between the pros-

ecution and the defense — by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

Most of what Dean told the jury yesterday, in his flat and sometimes tired-sounding voice, was what he had told the Senate Watergate Committee, and the committee's national television audience, during the hearings in the summer of 1973. Many of his phrases

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and even sentences were verbatim repeats of his earlier testimony.

Dean's testimony, combined with Mr. Nixon's White House tape recordings, are the basis of the prosecution's case.

Dean, who is imprisoned at Ft. Holabird, Md., is expected to be questioned by the prosecution in the Watergate conspiracy trial for the rest of the week with cross-examination taking several more days. His wife, Maureen, was seated next to Mrs. Haldeman.

Dean testified in chrono-



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JOHN W. DEAN III
A series of meetings

logical fashion and spoke for the most part only about the early stages of the alleged conspiracy. By the time he stepped down from the stand he had supplied a large chunk of evidence that, if believed, supports a number of elements of the government's basic charge.

That the defendants conspired to use perjury and destruction of evidence to obstruct the investigation of the Watergate break-in and to conceal the facts surrounding the break-in.

Dean's appearance came after an opening statement on behalf of the fifth defend-

ant, Kenneth W. Parkinson, in which Parkinson's attorney strongly implicated Mitchell — and after an unsuccessful attempt by Mitchell, in the wake of the Parkinson opening, to have his case severed.

Parkinson was hired as a lawyer for the Committee to Re-Elect the President to handle the lawsuit that the Democratic National Committee was bringing as a result of the break-in at the Democratic committee's headquarters in the Watergate complex on June 17, 1972.

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