

Watergate Prosecutors Close Case

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

The chief prosecutor at the Watergate cover-up trial somberly asked the jurors yesterday to close the ledger on Watergate with a verdict that will "balance the accounts" owed to the public.

In a short, succinct closing statement, chief prosecutor James F. Neal said the only excuse the five defendants had offered at the long trial for "this whole massive cover-up" had been to try to put the blame on men who had once been their subordinates.

"If you believe that," Neal said curtly, almost contemptuously, "find the defendants not guilty."

The jury seemed to hang on every word as Neal reminded them that the final judgment on the scandal was up to them.

He refrained once again from asking openly for guilty verdicts, but he submitted that the evidence was more than adequate against each of the five men sitting at separate defense tables with their lawyers: former White House aides H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, and Nixon re-election committee advisers Robert C. Mardian and Kenneth Wells Parkinson.

"This case," Neal said in slow, deliberate tones that seemed thick with emotion, "is not a political case—not a case of one party against another. I condemn lawlessness by one side or the other—wherever it is committed."

But in a democracy that rests on the consent of the governed, Neal added, "the only salvation for us all . . . is the faith of the people that their high officials will be fair, honorable and lawful—that the officials of the land will not play ignoble roles—that they may strike hard blows,

See TRIAL, A4, Col. 1



United Press International

Watergate defendant John Ehrlichman, left, and attorney William Frates enter court.

TRIAL, From A1

but they must not strike foul blows."

With the oratory all done and the testimony concluded, U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica told the jurors he would call them back Monday for his final instructions in the law before they begin their deliberations.

The defense arguments, which took nearly 15 hours in all, ended earlier in the day with an emotional windup by Parkinson's lawyer, Jacob Stein, who contended that his client had been an innocent dupe of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

Choking back sobs and sniffing into a handkerchief, Stein contrasted Parkinson's longstanding propriety as a Washington lawyer with the character of government witnesses who testified against him, such a former Nixon campaign deputy Jeb Stuart Magruder.

"What is good character worth?" Stein asked, citing all the various judges and attorneys who had trooped to the witness stand earlier in the trial on Parkinson's behalf.

"Is it to be redeemed in a moment of crisis or is it to be thrown away and tossed out cynically in favor of the testimony of confessed perjurers and ambitious people who seek Cabinet-level posts, knowing they are liars and thieves?"

The Watergate grand jury had accused Parkinson of

serving as a middleman for hush-money messages to and from the original Watergate defendants after he had been hired to defend the re-election committee against litigation prompted by the June 17, 1972, break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters here.

Stein protested that the government had not even been able to show just when Parkinson was supposed to have joined the conspiracy. Even Watergate prosecutors, the defense lawyer said, conceded that Parkinson had acted properly at the outset at least.

Calling Parkinson's case a sad one, Neal countered with a quatrain from Alexander Pope's Essay on Man:

*Vice is a monster of so
frightful mien,
As to be hated needs
but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, famil-
iar with her face,
We first endure, then
pity, then embrace.*

The government rebuttal to the defense arguments began with Assistant Watergate Special Prosecutor Richard Benveniste, who concentrated on Haldeman's contention that he never intended to obstruct justice in the Watergate case.

The former White House chief of staff had said he was unaware that the payments to the original Watergate defendants were meant as "hush money" until March 21, 1973,



Associated Press

Watergate defendant Kenneth Wells Parkinson, right, arrives at court with his mother and attorney Jacob Stein.

when former White House Counsel John W. Dean III told Nixon and Haldeman of E. Howard Hunt Jr.'s latest "blackmail" demand.

Ben-Veniste said the circumstantial evidence alone—which he likened to mother finding a broken jar of jam on the kitchen floor and her 3-year-old with jam all over his face—suggested otherwise.

"There are 429,500 jars of jam in this case, ladies and gentlemen," Ben-Veniste declared, in a reference to the \$429,500 secretly paid out for

the Watergate burglars. And Haldeman's lawyers, the young prosecutor charged, had plainly erred in claiming that the White House tape recordings showed no sign of hush-money knowledge on Haldeman's part.

Quoting from the March 21 tape, Ben-Veniste reminded the jurors that Haldeman had spoken then of "blackmail" in the past tense and described the first rush of payments as "what we had to give" to get past the 1972 elections.

The only explanation Halde-

man could offer for those remarks when he underwent cross-examination, the prosecutor declared, was to state: "I don't know what was in my mind at the time."

"Here is the jam, ladies and gentlemen," Ben-Veniste told the jurors. "It's on his hands and his face and he can't get it off."

His voice laden with sarcasm, Ben-Veniste also assailed Haldeman's claims on innocuous motives in enlisting top officials of the Central Intelligence Agency on June 23,

1972, to keep the FBI from tracking down some telltale Nixon campaign checks that had been cashed by one of the Watergate burglars.

The former White House chief of staff and his lawyers had insisted that Haldeman merely wanted to spare one of the contributors, Minneapolis businessman Dwayne Andreas, the embarrassment of being unmasked as a Nixon campaign contributor when he was publicly known as a supporter of Democratic candidate Hubert H. Humphrey.