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# Nixon Gives Up On Gray for FBI

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

WASHINGTON — The White House has privately — and not at all tearfully — given up hopes that the Senate will confirm L. Patrick Gray as the second director of the FBI, believing that Gray buried himself with his own blundering.

A serious search for Gray's successor has not yet begun, contrary to published reports that President Nixon has decided on Chief Jerry Wilson of the Washington Metropolitan Police. Indeed, high presidential aides say flatly there is no chance of Wilson being named.

An experienced police officer such as Wilson is not being sought. Rather, the job description talked about is a middle-level administration official (preferably with Justice Department experience) who, unlike Gray, has no connections with either the Watergate scandal or the Nixon political apparatus.

While some Republican senators complain Nixon cruelly undercut Gray by restricting his testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the White House feels he undercut himself by talking too much — believing Gray blundered by not seeking counsel from his superior, Atty. Gen. Richard Kleindienst, prior to the confirmation hearings.

What's more, the White House worries that Gray's deteriorating condition will get even worse if the Judiciary Committee begins to probe his record as acting FBI director. He could suffer from prospective testimony by recently resigned Assistant FBI Director Thomas Bishop, a Hoover protege and Gray's bitter critic.

In sum, Nixon has no hopes of Gray being confirmed but prefers to have the Senate kill him off rather than withdraw his nomination. The White House counts on Chairman James Eastland of Mississippi to force a Judiciary Committee vote that, barring startling changes, would reject Gray.

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