

Explosive Report on Watergate
Dean Says Nixon Knew of Coverup

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Ready to Testify, Newsweek Claims

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WASHINGTON — Former White House counsel John W. Dean III is prepared to testify that President Nixon knew of the attempt to cover up high-level involvement in the Watergate bugging as long ago as last September, Newsweek magazine said yesterday.

The magazine also said that its forthcoming issue, which reaches newsstands tomorrow or Tuesday, will report that Dean has told investigators that Nixon admitted to him on two occasions that he knew about efforts to hide the White House's connection with the burglary and attempted bugging of the Democratic Party's national headquarters.

Further, the magazine said, Dean says he was told by John Ehrlichman, the president's former chief domestic adviser, that Nixon promised executive clemency to convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt.

Stories Denied

A high administration official, who was not named, denied both stories, Newsweek said.

The magazine did not say whether Dean would tell his story to a grand jury or a Senate committee investigating the case.

The magazine said Dean told investigators he was summoned to the White House's Oval Office last September shortly after the initial seven Watergate indictments were returned and found Nixon and former White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman "all grins."

Newsweek quoted Dean as saying they were pleased by his efforts "to keep the lid on."

Nixon was quoted by Newsweek as having told Dean: "Good job, John. Bob told me what a great job you've been doing."

Named in Reports

Dean has been named in published reports as a participant in both the planning of the bugging of the Democratic headquarters in Washington as well as the subsequent coverup attempt.

Haldeman has been named by various sources as being involved in the coverup attempt.

Newsweek said the clemency promise came last December when a lawyer for Hunt sent a message to former White House counsel

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Charles Colson that steps had to be taken to prevent a long jail sentence for Hunt.

The message was relayed to Dean and Ehrlichman, the magazine said.

In Oval Office

According to Dean, Newsweek said, Ehrlichman took the message to Nixon in the Oval Office and came out with what he said was the President's promise of executive clemency for Hunt.

Dean said Ehrlichman told Colson to inform Hunt's lawyer that "everything is okay" but not to be "too specific."

Last Monday, Ehrlichman and Haldeman resigned their White House posts and Dean was fired. *4 MAY*

Dean claimed Friday, in papers filed with the U.S. District Court in Washington, to have removed documents dealing with the Watergate scandal from his White House office to prevent their "illegitimate destruction."

In Safe Deposit

Dean said he had placed the documents in a safe deposit box in a bank in Alexandria, Va.

He asked Chief Judge John J. Simica to take custody of two keys to the safe deposit box. He said the papers bore "a security classification."

There was no hint of the contents of the documents beyond Dean's claim that they dealt with the Watergate scandal.

It was Dean who, at Nixon's direction, conducted an investigation of the Watergate affair, purportedly to learn whether any members of the White House staff were involved.

Results Cited

In denying any such involvement, Nixon and his press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, had repeatedly cited the results of the Dean investigation, saying it cleared any "present" member of the White House staff.

Dean, however, has contended that his report was either "tampered with" or withheld from Nixon.

Further, Dean has insisted that he will not be the "scapegoat" for the White House in the Watergate scandal and is known to have provided federal prosecutors with potentially incriminating information.