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Dean Begins Sentence

Held in Area To Be Called As a Witness

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John W. Dean III surrendered to the United States marshal's office yesterday to begin serving a prison sentence for his confessed role in the Watergate cover-up.

Dean, whose accusations against President Nixon helped to break open the Watergate case, was taken to an undisclosed facility nearby to remain available as a witness against six other former Nixon aides at their Sept. 30 conspiracy trial.

The 35-year-old former presidential counsel was polite but unresponsive to newsmen at the U.S. Court House. He specifically declined to say whether he thought Mr. Nixon should also undergo prosecution or whether the latest tape recording disclosures gave him a sense of vindication.

Asked what he planned to do after serving at least a year of his sentence of one to four years, Dean replied, "I don't know." He has been disbarred from law practice following his guilty plea last October.

Dean admitted numerous actions aimed at concealing the blame for the 1972 burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex. The acts included attempting to spirit burglar E. Howard Hunt Jr. out of the country, coaching witnesses to lie and sending a clemency offer to defendant James C. McCord to secure his silence.

In a bid for a lighter sentence, Dean also sought to emphasize his role in warning Mr. Nixon against a cover-up, his cooperation with prosecutors and the information he gave that led to the discovery of the incriminating White House tapes.

Dean arrived at the courthouse at 3 p.m., two hours before the deadline for turning himself in. He wore a conservative steel-gray suit, blue shirt and dark tie, and sunglasses. The marshal's office said he would exchange this clothing for prison denims.

After a brief meeting with U.S. Marshal George K. McKinney, Dean was taken to the basement cell block for identification of fingerprints and mug shots that is routine for federal prisoners.

Then he was taken to the nearby detention location. Officials refused to confirm or deny that it was Ft. Holabird, just outside Baltimore, the nearest of a handful of U.S. centers for the protection of witnesses.

Although housed in a setting to safeguard witnesses, the marshal's office said Dean would be in custody even when released briefly to tes-

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tify or talk with Watergate Special prosecutors.

Asked whether Dean would enjoy unusual comfort, Horace Webb, spokesman for the marshal's office, replied, "It's no fun to be incarcerated."

When he is no longer needed on Watergate matters, Dean will be transferred to a minimum security prison facility to serve the remainder of his sentence. U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica has recommended the institution at Lompoc, Calif.