

John Dean Talks About Nixon, Hiss

New York

John Dean says in a forthcoming book that Richard Nixon told White House aide Charles Colson that the typewriter that helped convict Alger Hiss of perjury was a fake.

Hiss, a former State Department official, was convicted in 1950 of perjury after denying that he had passed secret documents to Whittaker Chambers, an admitted courier for a Communist spy ring.

Dean's book, entitled "Blind Ambition," contains a single passage about Hiss — one stemming from Nixon's worry about a memo in which Dita Beard, who worked as a public relations aide for ITT,

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implied that a big political contribution to the GOP from the corporation would wipe out the government's pending antitrust suit.

Dean writes that Mr. Nixon attempted to have the memo pronounced a forgery, and assigned Colson to do the job. The former White House lawyer adds that when Colson reported to the President, Mr. Nixon said he was reminded of the Hiss case, which propelled then-Congressman Nixon into national prominence.

He quotes Mr. Nixon as saying to Colson: "The typewriters are always the key. We built one in the Hiss case." The typewriter was perhaps the most important piece of evidence against Hiss.

Hiss' attorneys tried to get a new trial in 1952, contending that the serial number on Hiss' Woodstock typewriter did not match the typeface of documents that Hiss was charged with having typed. The motion was denied. Hiss served four years in prison.

Whittaker Chambers, a Time magazine editor and Hiss' main accuser, claimed the typewriter had been used to copy State Department documents. These documents, furnished by Chambers, were offered as evidence that Hiss was involved in espionage, although he never was tried on spy charges.

The FBI compared the typed portion of this material to correspondence that had been typed on Hiss' Woodstock machine and found that it matched.

Supporters of Hiss charged that the material had been faked, perhaps with a phony typewriter manufactured to display the same typeface as the Hiss machine.

Nixon was a congressman from California at the time he investigated the Hiss affair. It was his work on this case that catapulted him to national prominence and led to his being chosen as the running mate for General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower in 1952.

The book is being published by Simon and Schuster.

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