

Charges Dropped Against Watergate Defendant

Washington

Watergate coverup charges were formally dropped yesterday against former Assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian.

Special prosecutor Charles Ruff filed papers with U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica asking that the charges be dismissed.

Mardian was convicted Jan. 1, 1975, of one count of conspiring to obstruct justice as a result of his conduct in the Justice Department during the Watergate break-in investigation.

Last October, the U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the conviction, mainly on grounds Mardian's role in the coverup was so remote he should not have been tried with the central figures — former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former White House aides John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman.

Mitchell, Haldeman and Ehrlichman were convicted along with Mardian and their convictions were upheld by the Court of Appeals. They are now appealing to the Supreme Court.

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