

# White House Quizzed Gray on Data Leaks

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Acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray said yesterday that he had been "called on the carpet" last year by two of President Nixon top advisers for leaks of information in the Watergate bugging case.

Gray introduced records into the testimony at his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee showing that he met or talked with Presidential counsel John W. Dean III and John Ehrlichman, the President's top domestic adviser, at least 15 separate times about leaks during a four-month period before the election last year.

Gray's records indicate that news leaks about the Watergate investigation were, in fact, the major topic of discussion between Gray and the White House.

The telephone calls or meetings generally came immediately after news stories about the alleged involvement of former or present White House aides in the Watergate bugging or in a reportedly broader campaign of political espionage against the Democrats.

"I resented it," Gray said yesterday, "because I don't think there were those leaks within the FBI." Gray suggested that the leaks may have come from the U.S. attorney's office or the grand jury investigating the Watergate.

The first call about the leaks came from Ehrlichman the morning of June 21, the day after the first report appeared linking White House consultant E. Howard Hunt Jr. with the Watergate break-in June 17.

In the written information supplied to the Judiciary Committee, Gray noted the date of Ehrlichman's call (June 21), the time (9:35 a.m.), and added that the call concerned "safeguarding investigative procedures against leaks." Gray said he "advised we were handling the case as a major special with usual precautions for such a case and (had) very restricted distribution of information."

Two days after Ehrlichman's first call, Dean called Gray about "rumors of leaks of FBI information," according to Gray's written answer. About six hours later that day, June 23, Gray said he called Dean back to deny that information was being leaked from the FBI.

On June 28, the day G. Gordon Liddy was fired as finance counsel from the President's re-election committee for refusing to answer FBI questions about the Watergate, Gray was contacted by Dean about leaks and talked by telephone and met with Ehrlichman about "safeguarding investigative procedures against leaks," the written statement says.

Liddy's dismissal was not announced at the time and did not become public until more than two weeks later. Liddy, Hunt and five other men either pleaded guilty or were convicted at the Watergate trial in January.

Gray apparently was not contacted by either Dean or Ehrlichman during the entire month of July, a period in which relatively few news accounts of major significance appeared on the Watergate.

The White House contacts resumed with a call from Dean to Gray on Aug. 2, the day after the first news report saying that a \$25,000 Nixon campaign check had been deposited in the bank of one of the Watergate bugging suspects. The call, according to Gray's written testimony, was about "leaks of FBI information."

The next contact about leaks by Dean was made Sept. 19, the day after the first news report that two high officials in the Nixon campaign organization had received large cash disbursements from a fund used in part to finance an intelligence-gathering operation against the Democrats. Gray was in Kansas City, according to his documents, and Dean telephoned him there. In addition, Dean called Gray about leaks the next day, Sept. 20.

Dean also called Gray about leaks on Oct. 12, two days af-

ter The Washington Post reported that the FBI had uncovered a White House directed campaign of political spying and sabotage against the Democratic presidential contenders.

According to Gray's records, Dean called him at 9:05 a.m. on Oct. 18 and 25 minutes later appeared at Gray's office to discuss the news leaks. This was three days after the first news accounts saying that alleged political saboteur Donald H. Segretti was hired by the President's appointments secretary, Dwight L. Chapin.

The next day, Oct. 19, Ehrlichman talked by telephone and met with Gray about leaks of information.

The last contact by Dean concerning leaks was made Feb. 2, according to Gray. This was the day after Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) released a report saying that an investigation by his subcommittee had uncovered evidence indicating White House involvement in "a wide range of espionage and sabotage activities" during the 1972 presidential campaign.

Gray said the Feb. 2 contact by Dean also concerned an "FBI request to interview Mr. Chapin." This was four days after Chapin announced that he was resigning from the White House staff. Chapin had been earlier interviewed by the FBI. It could not be learned yesterday why the FBI might want another interview with Chapin after Feb. 2. The Watergate bugging trial was completed on Jan. 30.

According to federal sources, the FBI conducted several internal investigations during its Watergate inquiry to determine if FBI agents were the source of news accounts. Similarly, Dean reportedly attempted to determine if members of the White House staff were providing information to the press.

At the Committee for the Re-election of the President, according to employees there, the entire staff was instructed not to discuss the Watergate case with the press and several internal investigations were conducted to identify potential leaks.