

## No Part in Watergate Probe

# Kleindienst Gets Out of It

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N.Y. Times Service

### Washington

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst has disqualified himself from further involvement in the Watergate investigation, sources close to the case said yesterday.

The Attorney General's action, said to have been taken after a long meeting Sunday with President Nixon, means that Kleindienst will have no say in determining who will be prosecuted in the case.

There was no official announcement from the Justice Department about Kleindienst's decision nor about further indictments.

### MITCHELL

John N. Mitchell, the former attorney who was Kleindienst's superior in the

Justice Department for three years, said in a telephone interview—held last night before the Washington Post's story involving Mitchell, himself, appeared—that he did not believe “any inferences should be drawn one way or the other” from Kleindienst's decision.

He called that decision an “entirely appropriate and correct decision for (Kleindienst) to have taken” because of the Attorney General's “past associations” with a number of the people who have figured prominently in the Watergate speculation.

Mitchell said that what Kleindienst had done was “common practice” in private law as well as the Justice Department.

If Kleindienst stayed with the investigation, “no matter what he did, he would be accused of playing politics

because he knew so many of the people who have been mentioned in this thing.”

However, Mitchell insisted, it would be a “serious mistake” to read into Kleindienst's decision the “implication” that those who have appeared before the Watergate grand jury—including Mitchell himself—would be prosecuted.

### STRAUSS

In another Watergate development, Democratic national chairman Robert S. Strauss said he has not decided whether to accept a settlement offer of a reported \$525,000 from the Republicans in connection with a series of civil lawsuits filed by the Democrats after the break-in.

“I would think it (the Republican settlement) an admission of guilt,” he told a

Washington press club luncheon.

The Washington Post said Strauss confirmed yesterday that Mitchell made an effort earlier this month to persuade Democratic officials to drop their Watergate lawsuits.

Meanwhile, Maurice H. Stans, the former Commerce Secretary who served as Mr. Nixon's chief fundraiser in 1972, arranged a meeting with Lawyers for Common Cause, the citizens group that has sued the Republicans for a full disclosure of their campaign finances.

A Common Cause spokesman said that Stans had come with a written proposal to settle the case, but that John Gardner, the head of Common Cause, had refused the offer and the meeting had broken up.