

Watergate Forces Him Out

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Washington

L. Patrick Gray III resigned yesterday as acting director of the FBI and was immediately replaced by William D. Ruckelshaus.

President Nixon's selection of Ruckelshaus, who is administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, was announced late yesterday afternoon by White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler.

Ruckelshaus said he had asked for and had received from the President assurances that "no matter who is involved (in the Watergate affair) there would be no sparing of anyone."

The new FBI chief, appearing somewhat pale and glum, also told reporters he does not expect to serve for more than two months or so. The post should go permanently to someone with a law enforcement background, he added.

PAPERS

Gray's resignation followed reports that he had destroyed documents obtained from a key conspirator in the Watergate case after receiving them at a meeting with two ranking White House officials.

"Serious allegations concerning certain acts of my own during the ongoing Watergate investigation are now a matter of public record," the outgoing FBI chief said in a statement.

Gray said he was resigning "as a consequence" of reports that he had destroyed without reading two files taken from E. Howard Hunt Jr., a White House consultant who was convicted of plotting to spy on the Democrats last year.

MEETING

The Hunt files, according



L. PATRICK GRAY
'Certain acts of my own'

to Gray's statements to associates, had been given to him during a June 28 meeting with John D. Ehrlichman, assistant to the President for domestic affairs, and John W. Dean III, counsel to the President.

Gray has said he cannot swear he was ordered to destroy the papers. But he has indicated to friends that when Dean handed them to him Dean suggested that the papers "should never see the light of the day."

The swift developments at the FBI overtook the abrupt and unexplained resignation

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late Thursday night of Jeb Stuart Magruder, an administration figure said to be under suspicion in the bug-ging case.

Magruder, a former deputy director of the President's campaign organization who is understood to have implicated Dean and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell in the affair, quit as an assistant secretary of commerce.

IMAGE

Gray said his departure from the FBI "is required to preserve in both image and fact the reputation, the integrity, and the effectiveness" of the agency he has led since the death of J. Edgar Hoover last May 2.

Gray took pains in his statement to declare that the FBI "has been in no way involved in any of those per-

sonal acts of judgment that may now be called into question." He added:

"The FBI deserves the full trust of the American people. That is bedrock and must always remain so.

"I depart from the FBI with a clear conscience, the knowledge that I have done my duty as best I have been able to see that duty..."

One of Gray's supporters, Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep-Conn.) said he is "convinced" Gray was abused "... by those whom he had every reason to trust."

Weicker, a member of the Senate panel investigating the Watergate affair, asked why Dean had given the files to Gray and why Ehrlichman had "allowed this transaction to take place when by any criteria he knew it was wrong."

Weicker, who said he had talked with Gray about the destruction of documents and who confirmed the accounts of the activity, acknowledged that Gray had used bad judgment.

DEPARTURE

Gray was understood to have left his offices on the fifth floor of the Justice Department building shortly after his statement of resignation was read.

The former Naval commander, a Nixon loyalist who has served as a lawyer in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and in the Justice Department, had already been hobbled

politically by criticism of his handling of the Watergate case.

His nomination as permanent director of the FBI, a post he badly wanted, was withdrawn by President Nixon after it encountered difficulties in the Senate committee.

During hearings last month, Gray said he had sent reports on the FBI Watergate investigation to Dean and had allowed the President's lawyer to sit in on interviews with White House officials.

The news of Gray's departure reached the President as he returned from a one-day trip to Meridian, Miss., to view flood damage, and Ziegler said the resignation had been accepted.

The press secretary would not say whether Gray's resignation had been sought by the President, but he reported that Mr. Nixon had held "a long discussion" with Attorney General Richard Kleindienst Thursday night.

Reports on the destruction of the Hunt files were already circulating at the time, and Ziegler said the President had asked Kleindienst to take them up with Gray.

"This is all I can say," the press secretary said.



AP Wirephoto

WILLIAM RUCKELSHAUS TOOK OVER
Environment chief is now acting FBI director