

## How The Sources Revealed Watergate

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## Washington

In all the brilliant rocketfire of Watergate news — articles about burglaries and “burn bags” and disputes about who warned the President and who operated behind his back — a coherent system of factions and strategies is still at work.

So, at least, say “sources close to the case”—the code phrase for friends, relatives, lawyers and associates of the principals and the prosecutors, who continue to feed the heavy traffic of tactical rumors and “scoops” about the scandal in the capital.

The hottest fighting, and the origin of numerous news articles, appears now to be the war of nerves between lawyers who want immunity for ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III, and Federal prosecutors who want Dean's testimony against superiors.

## INDICT

Only with Dean's cooperation, say his lawyers, can the Government indict H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman the fallen chiefs of the White House staff.

Yet the prosecutors, wary against a possible bluff, are still threatening to indict Dean and take their chances on making a case against his bosses.

The encounter is the central, and most illustrative, example of the combat, in which old comrades in the Nixon army have now turned on one another, hoping to bargain for their own freedom by putting the finger on other wrongdoers.

## POSITION

Dean, who conducted the original White House investigation of Watergate, is in an extraordinary position: he is deeply implicated in the official coverup, if not in the Watergate raid itself; but as the in-house investigator, who had access to all the FBI information, he probably knows more than anyone else about the involvement of others.

The Justice Department is extremely reluctant to grant immunity from prosecution to such an apparently cen-

tral figure. Yet if Dean turns hostile and silent before the grand jury, as the Watergate burglars did, it may be impossible for the prosecutors to reach beyond Dean to the men who directed him.

Some of the most sensational news stories of the last week, seemingly unrelated to Dean's struggle, derived directly from it.

In the New York Times last Saturday, for example, authoritative sources were reported to have confirmed that Dean was asking for immunity — news that may have weakened his position by publicizing his concern for himself.

The next day, however, the Washington Post reported from sources in the Dean camp that Dean had written a comprehensive and damaging history of the whole Watergate affair, and that he also had information about other allegedly illegal activities undertaken by the Nixon administration since 1969.

Two of last week's big disclosures — about the reported burglary by two Watergate figures in the office of Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist and about the “burn bag” destruction of one conspirator's files by L. Patrick Gray III, then acting director of the FBI — can also be traced to Dean.

Both disclosures are understood to have been made by Dean to Earl J. Silbert, the chief Watergate prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office here. And both disclosures fit Dean's over-all strategy: to give provocative hints at the kind of explosive information he can deliver if he himself is assured of his freedom.

The disclosure about Gray's destruction of documents from the White House safe of E. Howard Hunt Jr. was released by Senator Lowell P. Weicker (Rep.-Conn.): Weicker was acting on Gray's behalf, after Justice Department officials told Gray that the story was certain to come up before the Watergate federal grand

jury. But the Justice Department officials had heard the story in turn from Silbert, who heard it first from Dean.

In other areas of the Watergate battlefield, the basic maneuver by former Nixon campaign and administration officials is essentially the same — to get some leverage with the prosecution by demonstrating the ability to implicate others.

Renewed reports Monday, for example, to the effect that Charles W. Colson, a former White House special counsel, helped instigate the Watergate bugging raid last June, could be traced through several intermediaries to Jeb Stuart Magruder, who was the deputy manager of the Nixon re-election campaign.

## CALL

For more than a month, Magruder had been telling friends about a call that Colson made to him early last year. According to the version published in the Time magazine dated May 7, Magruder had told federal prosecutors that Colson phoned him in February, 1972, and asked: “When the hell are we going to get this bugging plan approved?”

Yet, by a curious accident, Colson learned weeks ago of Magruder's hostility and had time to present his own, very different version to the prosecutors, ahead of Magruder's.

Late one evening in March in a bar in Bermuda, where Magruder and his lawyers were planning their strategy, a friend of Colson chanced to hear Magruder mention a phone call by which Colson could be implicated.

Remembering the call and forewarned of the attack, Colson gave his account in a written memorandum to Silbert, according, once again, to sources close to the case. As Colson recalled the event, G. Gordon Liddy and Hunt, a friend whom Colson had recruited for the White House staff, appeared in Colson's office one evening in February, 1972, and complained that they could not get a high-level hearing for their plan of campaign intelligence and counterintelligence.

According to Colson, bugging was never mentioned in the brief meeting. But he acknowledges that he called Magruder at the campaign headquarters and told him to give the two men a hearing.

Meanwhile, in one of the obscure attacks that have become typical of the infighting, friends of John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general and Nixon campaign manager, made an exploratory effort to implicate Colson. However, on Monday Mitchell announced that the assault against Colson was being abandoned.