

Dean, Chief Investigator, Is Now the Investigated

By ANTHONY RIPLEY
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WASHINGTON — May 10 — John Wesley Dean 3d, once the chief investigator of the Watergate scandals for the White House, has emerged as a central figure of suspicion himself.

Few outsiders knew Mr. Dean in the days before Watergate. He was counsel at the White House—the President's office lawyer. He served as one of those "faceless ghosts" at the White House, as Senator Peter H. Dominick, Republican of Colorado, has called them, men unseen behind the drapes of office, men who measure their success in the triumph of the man they serve.

A chronology of Watergate events tells much about Mr. Dean's fall from Presidential grace and how he has become an explosive central player in the drama:

December, 1971 — Mr. Dean introduced G. Gordon Liddy, later convicted in the Watergate case, to Jeb Stuart Magruder, second in command at the President's re-election committee. According to testimony at the Watergate trial, Liddy was hired as general counsel for the committee after the meeting.

January, February, March, 1972 — John N. Mitchell, the President's campaign director, met three times, he said, with Mr. Magruder, Mr. Dean and Liddy and rejected three times suggestions for bugging the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex.

July, 1972 — White House sources said Mr. Dean was the informal Presidential staff coordinator on all aspects of the Watergate burglary investigation.

August, 1972 — Mr. Dean was thrust to center stage by President Nixon who told a news conference that Mr. Dean had conducted a "complete investigation of all leads."

Reaction by Nixon

The President concluded: "I can say categorically that his investigation indicates that no one in the White House staff, no one in this Administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident."

September, 1972 — Seven Watergate figures were indicted. Newsweek magazine reported that the President had praised Mr. Dean for his work.

March, 1973 — In the confirmation hearings of L. Patrick Gray 3d to be director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mr. Gray testified that he had turned raw F.B.I. files over to Mr. Dean, that Mr. Dean sat in on interviews with White House staff by F.B.I. agents, and that Mr. Dean probably lied to the agents. Mr. Gray withdrew his name from consideration for permanent director.

April, 1973 — Mr. Dean met twice with the chief prosecutor in the Watergate criminal investigation. Mr. Dean issued a statement outside usual White House channels saying he would not be a "scapegoat" in the case.

Federal prosecutors said Mr. Dean was seeking immunity for prosecution in exchange for testifying. Friends close to Mr. Dean reported that the President had telephoned him to wish him a "happy Easter" and had said, "You're still my counsel." Reports traced to Mr. Dean's associates linked the Watergate burglars with the Pentagon papers trial and implicated Mr. Gray in the burning of possible evidence in the Watergate case.

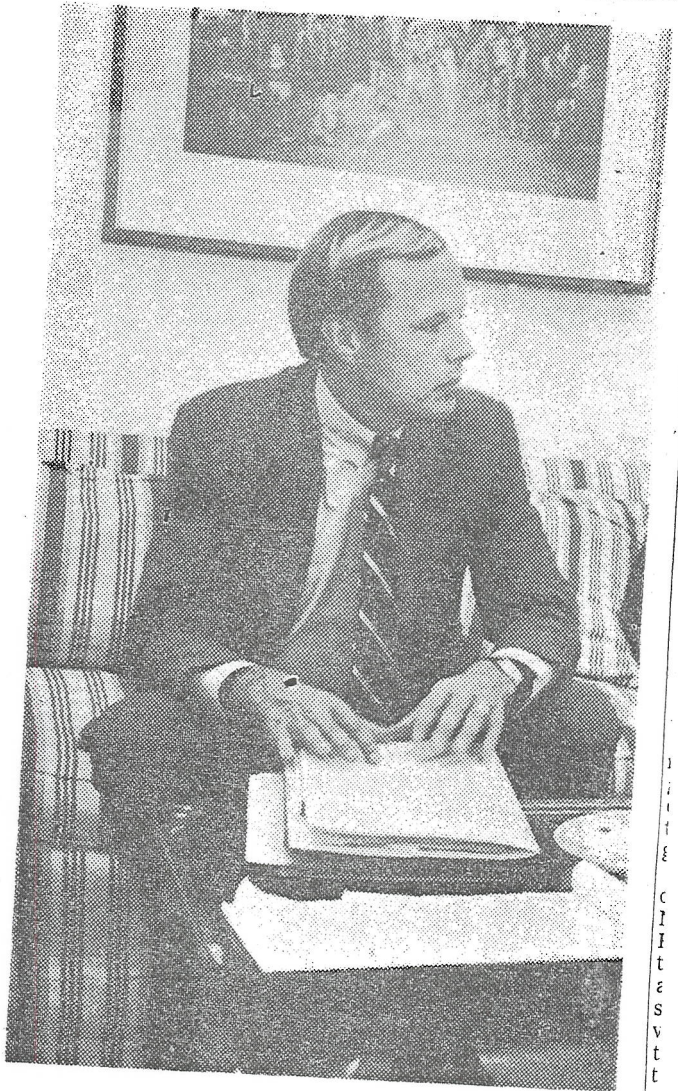
Mr. Gray resigned. Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst and two key White House aides, John D. Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, resigned. Mr. Dean was dismissed.

May, 1973 — Mr. Dean disclosed that he had placed papers dealing with the Watergate scandals in a safe-deposit box to prevent their "illegitimate destruction" and had given the keys to a Federal judge for safekeeping. With the Senate inquiry into the Watergate case set to open, the committee announced it would move to compel testimony from Mr. Dean in exchange for a grant of immunity.

Through all these developments, Mr. Dean is believed to have never spoken directly to the press on the matter. His statement on the "scapegoat" role was read to reporters by a secretary.

Reporters have staked out his \$70,000 townhouse in Alexandria, Va., on the edge of the Potomac River, waiting for him to appear.

He would appear suddenly driving off in his fast Porsche automobile, fruitlessly pursued by reporters in slower cars.



Fred J. Maroon

John W. Dean 3d in an office at the White House in 1971. At the time, he was counsel to President Nixon.

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