

ABC network news today said that L. Patrick Gray, the former FBI director, has told Senate investigators that he told President Nixon last July 6th that someone was trying to impede his investigation into the Watergate affair.

And the Washington Daily News said today that Gray had told the Senate investigating committee that he had been inhibited in his investigation by John Erhlichman from almost the beginning of the investigation. He said that he followed Mr. Erhlichman's orders only after he was satisfied that President Nixon was aware of his actions. The account in the News said that Gray told the Senate investigators he'd called a meeting between top FBI and CIA executives for June 28th, 11 days after the break-in at Democratic National Headquarters. He said he called that meeting because FBI agents were suspicious of CIA involvement in Watergate. The morning of June 28th, several hours before the meeting was scheduled, John Erhlichman told Gray, "I've canceled your meeting." The News account of Gray's Senate testimony said that he had tried to impress upon Mr. Erhlichman his suspicions of CIA involvement and the possibility that secret funds given to the Nixon re-election effort may have been CIA money, but Erhlichman still refused to permit the meeting.

He also told the Senate investigating committee that it was on June 28th that he received, in Mr. Erhlichman's office, from former White House counsel John Dean the two file folders that he was told "should never see the light of day." Mr. Gray told the Senate investigators that he took the files to his Connecticut home and kept them hidden for six months, burning them over the Christmas holidays without ever having looked at them. That report contradicts earlier statements from Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut, who said Gray had told him that he had the files burned several days after receiving them.

Mr. Gray also said that he was so concerned about the run-around his agents were getting from White House aides and staffers of the re-election committee that he telephoned Clark MacGregor in San Clemente, California, early the morning of July 5th. Gray is quoted as having told MacGregor he was convinced the FBI and CIA were being used and abused by persons around the President. Gray is said to have urged MacGregor, who was then in charge of the re-election committee, to tell Nixon of those suspicions. It was one day later that ABC says Gray made the revelations to Nixon.

Mr. MacGregor recalled the conversation to the News but said that Gray did not mention Erhlichman or the CIA in the conversation, and said that he did not remember the specifics because he doesn't keep logs of telephone conversations. He said that Gray did not ask him to talk to Nixon about anything. He said, "It's ridiculous to assert Gray brought his suspicions to me about being handicapped in his own job. I had nothing to do with the investigations. You should ask him what he said to his boss, Dick Kleindienst, then the Attorney General."

[End of item.]