



Dean Gives Files To Federal Court

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Super - secret national security documents, lifted from White House files by ousted Presidential counsel John W. Dean III, were turned over to a federal court yesterday to be passed on to Watergate investigators.

Acting under a court order he requested, Dean retrieved the mysterious papers—which he contends are more secret than “top secret” and relate to the Watergate scandal — from an Alexandria, Va., bank vault where he hid them two weeks ago.

As a U.S. marshal looked on, Dean and a bank official turned twin keys in the lock on Dean's safe deposit box and Dean pulled out a sealed Manila envelope imprinted with “White House” in the upper left-hand corner. He turned the envelope over to waiting court officials.

BLOW

A federal court's decision to take possession of the Dean papers was a blow to the White House, which has asked the court to order the papers returned sight unseen. Apparently the only person who knows what is in them is Dean himself.

He told the court ten days ago he took the papers and hid them shortly before President Nixon fired him

April 30 because he feared they would be stolen or destroyed if he left them in his White House office.

Granting a motion by Dean, chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica agreed to have the mysterious papers transferred to the court for safe-keeping, but directed that Watergate prosecutors and the special Senate Watergate committee — who had also put in bids to

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get the documents — be provided “certified copies.”

“Everybody wins,” Sirica said in announcing his decision at the end of a 25-minute hearing.

He then dispatched Dean and the court clerk to retrieve the papers — described as one 43-page document and eight supplementary items bound in a blue folder — from Dean's safety deposit box.

TENSE

Dean, who has eluded reporters for weeks, showed up for the court hearing looking tense and under great strain.

Rising from his seat and standing erectly as Sirica asked him a few questions, Dean told the judge he papers he had hidden were classified “top secret handled via Commint channels.”

He did not elaborate, other than to say they came from “a combination of several agencies, including the FBI, and other national security agencies.”

“Commint” stands for “Communications Intelligence” and the security classification Dean mentioned is one of those used for intelligence data.

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Asked by Sirica how the documents related to the national security, Dean replied: “The fact it has a classification on it indicates those who did the classifying felt it had something to do with the national security.”

Reporters followed Dean into an elevator, firing questions, but he refused to answer.

His lawyer, Charles N. Shaffer, did say “balderdash” when asked about a New York Times story that Dean had tried to set up a network of political spies to infiltrate anti-war groups before the 1972 Democratic and Republican national conventions.