

Kalmbach Speaks Of Cover-up Role



Jack Anderson

BY PRESIDENT NIXON'S account, aide John Ehrlichman wasn't supposed to impede the Watergate investigation but merely to make sure it didn't impinge upon national security. Yet Ehrlichman spoke only about political security when he asked Herbert Kalmbach to participate in the Watergate cover-up.

As Kalmbach has recounted the conversation to investigators, Ehrlichman warned that the investigation could "jeopardize" the election campaign. In a reference to the Democrats, he snorted: "They'll have our heads in their laps."

Kalmbach had agreed to raise money to pay the living and legal expenses of the Watergate defendants. He was never told the money would be offered as a bribe to buy their silence, but the James Bond intrigue made him suspicious.

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HE SOUGHT reassurances from Ehrlichman, whom he confronted in the White House in late July. Kalmbach told investigators that he put the question on a personal basis. "John," he said, "we've been friends for 10 years. You know my family and I know your family. I want you to tell me whether this assignment is proper and must be carried out.

He quoted Ehrlichman as reassuring him that the payoffs were entirely proper but that the secrecy was necessary for political reasons.

The last approach to Kalmbach for payoff money was made as late as January 18, 1973, at a meeting in ex-Attorney General John Mitchell's office. Kalmbach recalled that John Dean, then the White House counsel, had accompanied him to the meeting. But by this time, Kalmbach had decided he wanted nothing more to do with the project, so he quietly excused himself after 10 minutes.

As the President's personal attorney, Kalmbach has been one of the most silent men in the Watergate mystery. He has told his story to investigators, however, with quiet candor.

A few days after the waterbuggers were caught, he was summoned to Washington by John Dean, who arranged to meet him on the street in front of the Hay-Adams Hotel. Dean carefully stressed the necessity for secrecy and then asked him to underwrite the Watergate defendants' expenses.

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DEAN SUGGESTED that the hush money, as it was later used, should be channeled through a New York private detective named Anthony Ulasewicz. The undercoverman was known to Kalmbach who, in 1969, had set up a special bank account to pay him \$22,000 a year, plus expenses, for investigative work. Ulasewicz's main assignment, though Kalmbach was never told this, was to dig up dirt on Senator Ted Kennedy (Dem.-Mass.).

Kalmbach told investigators he collected between \$210,000 and \$230,000, which was distributed to the Watergate defendants.

The arrangements were handled with elaborate secrecy. Kalmbach and Ulasewicz placed calls to one another through pay phones and used verbal shorthand to identify the people involved in their conversation.

It was this James Bond business, Kalmbach told investigators, that finally persuaded him to end his roll in the Watergate conspiracy.

Note: In regard to a column last week about the Continental Investment Corporation, the word "Investment" was inadvertently dropped.