

# HALDEMAN DENIES MAGRUDER REPORT ON COVER-UP PLOT

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## Lawyer Says Ex-Staff Chief Has a Diary That Refutes Testimony on His Role

### MEETING DATE DISPUTED

### Topic of the First Session Held Is Said to Have Been a Job, Not Watergate

NY Times

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WASHINGTON, June 15—H. R. Haldeman's attorney denied today that the former White House chief of staff had learned of the Watergate cover-up plot in January at a meeting with Jeb Stuart Magruder.

This conflicts with the sworn statements given yesterday to the Senate Watergate committee by Mr. Magruder, who served as deputy director of Mr. Nixon's campaign organization.

The lawyer, John J. Wilson, said that an appointment diary, in which Mr. Haldeman's secretary had noted "everyone who went through his door," shows that he did not meet with Mr. Magruder this year until Feb. 14.

The session dealt with a Government job for Mr. Magruder, Mr. Wilson asserted, and it was not until late in March, when President Nixon had reopened an investigation, that Mr. Magruder indicated that a cover-up had in fact occurred.

#### Earlier Haldeman Stand

Mr. Haldeman could not be reached for comment, but Mr. Wilson's statements on his behalf were essentially the same as those made under oath by the former Presidential adviser in pretrial testimony last month.

Meanwhile, an aide to the special Watergate Prosecutor, Archibald Cox, said that Mr. Cox might open new investigations beyond those already publicly connected with the case.

Mr. Magruder told the Senators yesterday that he had sent full reports on plans for the espionage efforts to one of Mr. Haldeman's assistants, Gordon C. Strachan, in the months before the Watergate arrests on June 17.

"I had to assume," Mr. Magruder said at one point, "that since I communicated completely [on the wiretapping plot] that these communications were known to Mr. Haldeman to some extent."

Mr. Magruder cautioned that this was "strictly an assumption," and Mr. Haldeman rejected it entirely in his sworn deposition taken in connection with civil litigation arising from the scandal. It included

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his exchange:

"Q. Prior to June 17 of 1972, Mr. Haldeman, did you have any knowledge, personal or hearsay, of any plans to engage in a bugging attempt at the Democratic National Committee headquarters?"

"A. I did not."

#### Magruder Testimony

The more serious issue involves the alleged meeting last January, which Mr. Magruder described in his testimony yesterday as follows:

"I thought probably that this maybe was becoming scapegoat time, and maybe I was going to be the scapegoat, and so I went to Mr. Haldeman, and I said I just want you to know that this whole Watergate situation and the other activities was a concerted effort by a number of people, and so I went through a—literally—monologue on what had occurred."

This meeting took place before Mr. Magruder's testimony at the Watergate trial in January, according to his version. He perjured himself by covering up the plot, and he testified at the Senate hearing that Mr. Haldeman had known he was going to lie.

Mr. Haldeman's deposition in the civil suit brought by the Democratic National Committee includes this exchange:

"Q. Did you have any conversations with him [Mr. Magruder] up to the present time in which he made any statements to you indicating that he did have knowledge of the Watergate matter prior to June 17, 1972?"

#### A Difference on Dates

"A. Yes, he did. I think that would have been the conversation that I had with him with [former Attorney General] John Mitchell present in late March [of 1973]."

Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ma-

gruder agree that they talked over a job in the Administration for Mr. Magruder. But Mr. Magruder says this discussion was part of the January meeting and Mr. Haldeman's lawyer, Mr. Wilson, says it took place on Feb. 14.

By that time the Watergate trial was over, so that Mr. Haldeman would at least not have had advance knowledge.

But Mr. Wilson said today that the Feb. 14 meeting did not involve a cover-up discussion. The lawyer pointed out that Mr. Magruder had been given a job in the Commerce Department as director of policy development.

If Mr. Magruder had informed Mr. Haldeman of his prior knowledge of the bugging and of his participating in the effort to cover up responsibility for it, Mr. Wilson argued, the White House chief of staff would scarcely have approved his Administration job.