

Billy Graham Denies Role In Tax Audit

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Evangelist Billy Graham says he is "completely mystified" by a report that he got the White House to block an audit of his income taxes. Christianity Today magazine reported in its Wednesday edition.

"I have never asked for any intervention and I have not been aware of any intervention," the magazine quoted Graham as saying. The evangelist is one of its contributing editors.

Ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III testified at the Senate Watergate hearings that pressure was brought on him to help stop tax audits that were being made on some of President Nixon's friends. The hearings will resume Tuesday, when former Attorney General John N. Mitchell is scheduled to appear.

In his testimony last Friday, Dean did not identify either the persons making the requests to block tax audits, or the President's friends.

"I was told I was to do something about these audits that were being performed on two friends of the President, that they felt they were being harassed and the like," Dean testified. He said he later saw a memo on which then White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman had written, "This has already been taken care of."

The Washington Post reported two days previously that the Senate committee had a memorandum that former White House aide John J. Caulfield had sent to Dean about tax audits on Graham and actor John Wayne. Graham and Wayne are close friends of the President.

The Post said the memo also had a routing slip addressed to Haldeman and his assistant, Larry Higby. It said that scribbled on the slip, in different handwriting, were: "Next question: Can we do anything to help?" and "No, it's already covered."

The committee has not released any such memo.

Graham said that as far as he knows, the audits on his returns have been settled in the local Asheville, N.C., office of the Internal Revenue Service.