

3 Watergate Prosecutors Told To Stay Off 'Face the Nation'

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Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson has ordered the three original Watergate prosecutors to cancel their scheduled appearance on a national televised news program on Sunday.

Shortly after they withdrew from the Watergate case last weekend, the prosecutors — Earl J. Silbert, Seymour Glanzer and Donald E. Campbell — had accepted an invitation to answer newsmen's questions on "Face the Nation" (CBS, WTOP).

Justice Department sources said that the prosecutors had been "anxious to protect themselves" against allegations that they had not adequately pursued Nixon administration officials during their original investigation of the scandal.

The case is now completely in the hands of special prosecutor Archibald Cox, a Harvard University law school professor, and his staff.

So eager were the former Watergate prosecutors to explain themselves publicly that Campbell said he would cut short a vacation in order to return to Washington in time for the program, according to a CBS producer.

All three agreed to appear without notifying their superiors at the Justice Department, and the interview with them was announced, as is customarily done, at the conclusion of "Face the Nation" last Sunday.

That announcement passed unnoticed at the Justice Department, however, until Tuesday morning, when James Vorenberg, one of Cox' assistants, brought it to the attention of Deputy Attorney General Joseph T. Sneed.

Sneed raised the matter with Richardson at a staff meeting that morning, according to Justice Department spokesman Horace Webb, and the Attorney General summoned Silbert and Glanzer to a meeting in his office later in the day.

Richardson told the prosecutors that it would be a violation of department rules—and possibly of American Bar Association standards—for them to submit to "wide-open questioning concerning a pending case."

It was apparently not sufficient assurance for Richardson that the prosecutors

had warned CBS that they would be unwilling to discuss the merits of the case, but would restrict themselves to procedural questions.

Webb insisted that "the Attorney General is not attempting to muzzle" Silbert, Glanzer and Campbell, and that the cancellation of their appearance was merely intended to avoid undue publicity about the Watergate investigation.

Other sources said that the meeting between the Attorney General and the former Watergate prosecutors was "cordial" despite a strong disagreement about the TV program.

The Justice Department spokesman added that there was some annoyance over Silbert's appearance alone last Monday on the CBS "Morning News"—also without prior clearance or the knowledge of his superiors—but that "no punitive action" would be taken against him.

Richardson and Cox had reviewed a transcript of that interview before Tuesday's meeting, The Washington Post's sources added.

Sylvia Westerman, producer of "Face the Nation," said yesterday that the sudden withdrawal of the prosecutors had left the program without a guest for this Sunday. She said Richardson had been asked to appear instead, but is not expected to accept.