

Watergate Buff Missed Only One Hearing

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She usually makes a sandwich the night before, and packs a piece of fruit with it then so she doesn't lose any time the next morning.

By 3:30 A.M., after a few hours of sleep, 254-year-old Charleen Treffinger is up and ready for the hour-and-a-half drive to Washington, the search for a parking space near the Capitol, and the two-hour wait until 9:4, when the huge wooden doors to the Senate Caucus room are opened.

And by 10 with the same inevitability as Sam Ervin's arched eyebrows and homespun wisdom, Miss Treffinger is ready for another day of the suspense of the water-gate hearings.

Two months have passed since the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities opened its hearings on the Watergate affair, and Miss Treffinger has been there every day except the first—when she mistakenly thought they were closed to the public.

Her unwavering interest in the hearings has made Miss Treffinger, a graduate of Ohio University, stand out at the hearings. Reporters interview her as she sits outside the committee room on the cold marble floor of the Old Senate Office Building. Capital policemen point her out, and some fellow tourists stare in admiration.

The attention leaves Miss Treffinger with mixed feelings. "It bothers me," she said yesterday, "it flatters me. People make such a big deal out of it. They make it like I have to go through balls and chains to get here."

Capacity for Waiting

She admits, however, that the long hours of waiting can get tiring. "This is more a duty in a way. It's not like pure pleasure. But it's good to be here to show your support" for the committee.

The experience is nothing new. "I have a real capacity for waiting," she said, and told of coming home from college several years ago to see her hometown team, the Baltimore Orioles, play in the World Series.

Her grandmother picked her up at 3 A.M. and suggested that Miss Treffinger go home and sleep for a few hours before waiting in line for tickets.

"I waited for four hours," she recalled, "and didn't get in. So I came right back at 5 that afternoon and spent the night. That was really an experience. It was like Woodstock."

Her worst moment at the hearings, Miss Treffinger

said, was when she arrived late one day and couldn't get in the hearing room to hear Jeb Stuart Magruder, former deputy of John N. Mitchell at the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

"Magruder was up there for an hour," she recalls with a slight trace of panic in her voice, "and I didn't know what he was saying. That was really frustrating."

For the same reason, Miss Treffinger said, she likes to get home at night in time for

the news. "There could be things that happen after I leave," she said.

Her parents are skeptical of her consuming interest, Miss Treffinger said, "but they accept it. I try to generate a lot of enthusiasm about Watergate at home."

And several of her friends at one time or another have expressed interest in joining her, Miss Treffinger said, "but mostly they fink out, because they don't want to get up that early."



Charleen Treffinger, who has attended every session of the Watergate hearings except first, when she mistakenly thought they were closed to the public, listens to testimony.

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