

NYTimes
Office of Cox Is the Calm
At Eye of Capital Storm

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

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WASHINGTON, July 18—If there is a calm at the center of the storm created by the Watergate scandal, it is the fortress-like headquarters of the Government's special prosecution force, tucked away in the ninth floor of an office building three blocks from the White House.

Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor, wants a low profile during these times of sensational charges made at the Senate Watergate committee's televised hearing and leaks to the press by friends and one-time friends of the Nixon Administration.

Behind what is perhaps the most elaborate electronic security system in Washington outside of the White House, Mr. Cox has tried, with considerable success, to create a calm environment in which his lawyers can draw up the indictment that is expected to name some of the Watergate figures. The indictment may come next month.

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The special prosecutor's concern over what he considers prejudicial publicity in the Watergate case extended beyond his own office. Mr. Cox tried unsuccessfully in May, for example, to get the Senate Watergate committee to put off its hearings indefinitely.

Today, in a brief filed in Federal District Court here, he suggested "there may come a point" when the oft-delayed civil battle between the Democratic and Republican parties would have to be postponed until the criminal trial of those named in the upcoming indictment was complete.

The staff of lawyers that Mr. Cox is assembling—many of them are young honors graduates of Harvard Law School, from which he is on leave as a professor—seems to grow almost weekly as the special prosecutor's office moves more deeply into the Watergate scandal and related matters.

34 Lawyers on Staff

Mr. Cox's "law firm" now includes 34 lawyers, and he plans to increase the number to 50, backed by an administrative personnel, if Congress approves the \$2.8-million budget that he has requested for the current fiscal year.

New appointments are among the few acts that Mr. Cox seeks publicity for, and at a rare news conference last week Henry S. Ruth Jr., his 42-year-old deputy, announced four new ones.

Afterward, Mr. Ruth replied "no comments" to most questions about the progress of the special prosecutor's investigation.

Nevertheless, some new facts do emerge from behind the closed-circuit television system that guards the special prosecutor's office, such as the following:

A number of corporations have come forward as a result of Mr. Cox's request, and some have admitted violating Federal laws prohibiting the donation of corporate money to political candidates. The only company to make a public statement so far is American Airlines. The Finance Committee to Re-elect the President has agreed to return its \$55,000 contribution.

The 23-member Watergate grand jury, which was suspended during the shift of responsibility for the investigation from the Justice Department of Mr. Cox, has been reconvened and is again taking testimony.

Mr. Cox has ordered the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which does most of the field work for his office, to undertake an "immediate, exhaustive" inquiry into the activities of Donald H. Segretti, a California lawyer the White House hired last year to illegally disrupt the campaigns of President Nixon's Democratic opponents.

Bipartisan Praise

Mr. Cox's bow ties and broad grin are infrequently seen in public, except during his early morning, two-mile walk to his downtown office from the

Georgetown home of friends where he is staying.

The tall, graying special prosecutor was seen briefly last week when he appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee to testify on his budget request. It should be quickly approved, judging from the bipartisan praise he received from the committee's members, including Roman S. Hruska, the Republican conservative from Nebraska.

The committee members asked Mr. Cox for virtually no details about what his office was doing, or how he planned to spend the additional funds. Afterward, reporters were led by a cheerfully uncommunicative Mr. Cox, who is in better shape than most of them, on a brisk, uninformative walk through the corridors of the New Senate Office Building. He rounded a corner, vanished down a stairwell and has not been seen since.