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Inquiry on Nixon, 5 Others Is Confirmed by Coast Bar

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LOS ANGELES, Aug. 1 —

The State Bar of California confirmed today that a preliminary investigation was initiated in May into the actions of President Nixon and five other lawyers in California who have testified or been the subject of comments before the Senate Watergate committee.

Leonard S. Janofsky, president of the state bar, denied that formal proceedings had been begun, but said at a Los Angeles news conference this morning that the inquiry could lead to disciplinary action, including disbarment by the State Supreme Court.

The six lawyers named as subjects of the investigation are Richard M. Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, former assistant to the President for domestic matters; Herbert W. Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's former personal attorney; Gordon C. Strachan, former aide to the resigned White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman; Robert C. Mardian, a former political consultant to the Committee for the Re-election of the President, and Donald H. Segretti, who allegedly directed efforts to sabotage the candidacies of Democratic contenders in the 1972 Presidential election.

Disciplinary Measure

If formal proceedings are instituted and a recommendation is made for action by the State Supreme Court, disciplinary measures could include disbarment or suspension. On its own authority, the bar can issue a public or private reproof.

According to Mr. Janofsky, the state bar has a disciplinary duty to dispense when member lawyers commit "any act of moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption, whether a felony or misdemeanor has been committed or not."

The proceedings, if formally initiated, could last for many months. In less sensitive cases, the long procedure of a preliminary hearing, a formal trial and a recommendation to the court can take 15 to 24 months.

According to Mr. Janofsky, one attorney on the investigative staff of the state bar is currently monitoring evidence being developed by the Senate Watergate committee. Requests for cooperation have been made to prosecuting authorities, including Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, chairman of the Watergate committee; Archibald Cox, the special Government prosecutor in Washington; United States Attorney John Briggs in Florida



Associated Press

Leonard S. Janofsky, head of the State Bar of California, at news session in Los Angeles yesterday.

and District Attorney Joseph Busch in Los Angeles.

In a letter of June 22, addressed to Senator Ervin, Helen J. Small, the disciplinary counsel for the state bar, requested information about the lawyers be turned over "at an appropriate time." The letter did not accuse any of the lawyers of violation of law or the legal profession's ethics.

Mr. Janofsky said that the only response he had received was from Mr. Cox, who said he would be willing to cooperate, but that if any activities resulted in indictments and trials, it would not be possible to make any evidence available until "further down the line."

According to Mr. Janofsky, the board started its investigation three months ago after re- But he added that since that time the state bar has received "numerous" complaints from individual lawyers as well as resolutions on behalf of groups of attorneys.

Ordinarily, the state bar cannot comment on inquiries into possible proceedings until public discipline has been imposed by the disciplinary board or a recommendation for discipline has been made to the State Supreme Court.

However, the state bar decided to waive the rule of confidentiality partly "because of the general knowledge about the events of Watergate and the public assertion of misconduct by some lawyers."