

Chapter 2:

What began as an apparently simple burglary on June 17, 1972, has become so extraordinarily complex that students of Watergate are losing track of who did or said what and when and where and to whom.

On May 13, The Examiner published a chronology that summarized events preceding the hearings of the Senate Watergate Committee. Here is Chapter Two.

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1973

May 17 — The Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Abuses — the Senate Watergate Committee — opens its hearings with Robert C. Odle, a former official of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, the first witness. Odle testifies that John Mitchell made major decisions in the re-election campaign for about a year before he resigned as attorney general and became chairman of the re-election committee.

May 18 — Convicted Watergate conspirator James McCord tells the committee that former White House aide John Caulfield conveyed repeated offers of executive clemency to him for silence about the burglary. McCord says Caulfield told him Nixon knew of the offers.

G. Gordon Liddy, Watergate burglary mastermind and Nixon campaign lawyer who sealed his lips and pleaded guilty at the trial of the Watergate Seven, is disbarred from practicing law in the state of New York.

Harvard law professor Archibald Cox, a Democrat, is named the Justice Department's special prosecutor of the Watergate case.

May 21 — Former CIA Director Richard Helms tells Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the White House chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, ordered the CIA to discourage the FBI from an investigation related to Watergate, saying "it is the President's wish."

May 22 — Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans, later chief Nixon campaign fundraiser, plead innocent to charges of perjury and conspiracy in alleged plot to block a federal investigation of New Jersey financier Robert L. Vesco.

Caulfield testifies at Senate hearings that at instructions of John Dean, then White House counsel, he relayed executive clemency offers to McCord, telling him the offers came from "the highest level of the White House."

President Nixon admits he added burglary to the list of approved tactics by government intelligence agents in July, 1970, but says he withdrew the authorization five days later because the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover objected strongly.

McCord testifies that Liddy planned a burglary of the office of a Las Vegas newspaper publisher to obtain "blackmail-type" information on a Democratic presidential candidate, later reported to be Sen. Edmund Muskie. He says the Liddy plan included use of a getaway plane owned by Howard Hughes.

May 25 — Former acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray tells a closed Senate subcommittee hearing he warned Nixon three weeks after the Watergate burglary that his top aides were "trying to mortally wound you."

May 29 — White House press secretary Ziegler says Nixon will not appear before either government investigators or the federal grand jury.

June 4 — Watergate prosecutor Cox propose three-month postponement of Senate Watergate Committee hearings. The committee chairman, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), promptly rejects the suggestion.

The White House acknowledges that President Nixon conferred in the spring with Dean on Watergate but says

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Now a familiar TV scene—the Senate Watergate Committee

the President will not release logs of the talks on grounds it would be "constitutionally inappropriate."

June 5 — After a week's recess, the Senate Watergate hearings resume. Robert A. Reisner, a Nixon re-election campaign aide, testifies he placed papers from a so-called "Gemstone" political espionage file in an envelope prepared for a meeting with Mitchell. Jeb Stuart Magruder, No. 2 at the re-election committee, carried the papers to Mitchell, says Reisner.

June 6 — Former Nixon re-election campaign treasurer Hugh W. Sloan testifies he tried to warn John Ehrlichman, President Nixon's former chief domestic adviser, in July, 1971, that the entire re-election organization might be involved in Watergate. He says Ehrlichman told him: "I don't want to know."

June 6 — Special Prosecutor Cox asks federal court to order Senate Watergate committee to hear testimony in closed session or at least without radio and TV coverage.

June 7 — Haldeman, in a deposition for a civil suit, says Nixon never asked Dean to investigate the possibility of White House involvement in the Watergate affair. Nixon had said during the 1972 campaign that an investigation by Dean had cleared all current administration employees of involvement.

Herbert L. Porter, a Nixon re-election campaign aide, tells Senate Committee he lied under oath as a witness at the trial of the Watergate Seven. He says he gave perjured testimony about the purpose of \$100,000 given to Liddy to finance the Watergate wiretap-burglary.

June 12 — U.S. District Judge John Sirica rejects special prosecutor Cox's request to order a TV blackout of Senate Watergate testimony by Dean and Magruder. The judge also grants Dean and Magruder limited immunity from prosecution for their Senate testimony.

Stans tells Senate committee he gave \$75,000 in campaign funds to Herbert W. Kalmbach, President Nixon's personal attorney, shortly after the Watergate break-in. He

swears Kalmbach did not tell him the money was for the Watergate Seven.

June 13—Stans tells the committee he saw no coverup and suspected nothing wrong in the re-election campaign until nine months after Watergate.

June 14—Magruder testifies that Mitchell played a direct role in both the Watergate bugging and the coverup. Moreover, says Magruder, Haldeman was kept abreast of both plots. Magruder also says Stans was told in general terms about the Watergate raid at a meeting seven days after the break-in. Magruder says that Mitchell approved a \$250,000 espionage plan by Liddy including an item calling for wiretapping the Democratic headquarters.

June 18—The Senate committee votes to postpone hearings for a week while Nixon meets in Washington with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

June 25—Hearings resume with Dean, the long-awaited star witness, testifying:

- Nixon told him in March the payment of \$1 million in hush money to the Watergate defendants would be "no problem."

- He told Nixon last Sept. 15 of his efforts to keep the scandal "out of the White House." And Nixon told him he hoped the criminal case against the Watergate Seven would not come to trial before the election.

- "It is my honest belief that while the President was involved, he did not realize or appreciate the implications of his involvement."

- He told the President that Kalmbach had been used to raise money for the Watergate defendants at the instruction of Ehrlichman, Haldeman and Mitchell.

- Nixon told him last Feb. 27 he considered Haldeman and Ehrlichman to be "principals" in the case.

- On March 21 he gave the President a full report of all the facts he knew. (In his April 17 statement, Nixon said

it was on March 21 that he first became aware of "major developments" in the case.)

- Haldeman and Ehrlichman directed the Watergate coverup and Mitchell campaign aides Robert C. Mardian and Frederick C. LaRue were involved from the start.

- The President lied on April 17 when he said an intense new investigation of the wiretapping affair had begun.

- Ehrlichman insisted that arrested wiretapper-conspirator F. Howard Hunt be ordered to leave the country.

- Ehrlichman told him to throw embarrassing material found in Hunt's White House safe into the Potomac River.

- Liddy's wiretapping plans were first presented to Mitchell Jan. 27, 1972, in the then attorney general's office.

- Washington attorney Charles Colson, a former White House aide, was deeply involved.

June 26—Dean testifies the White House maintained an "enemies list" of people unfriendly to the Nixon Administration and that the Internal Revenue Service was used to seek embarrassing information about some on the list.

June 27—A series of memoranda turned over to the Watergate committee by Dean names politicians and other citizens considered political foes of President Nixon who were marked for a campaign of harassment.

LaRue, a Mississippi businessman and aide to Mitchell at the re-election committee, pleads guilty to conspiring to obstruct justice in the Watergate case and declares his willingness to testify as a government witness.

The Senate committee receives a communication from Fred Buzhardt, counsel to the President. It brands Dean as "the principal actor" in the Watergate coverup and names Mitchell as a Watergate conspirator from the start.

June 28—The Buzhardt document, in White House parlance, becomes "inoperative." Buzhardt says the President had reviewed it but declares it does not represent the White House position on the Watergate affair.

The White House again rules out any appearance by the President before the Senate committee, either voluntarily or by subpoena.

Dean, in his fourth day of testimony, says it was his assumption "without question" that President Nixon was informed of coverup efforts prior to last Sept. 15.

June 29—Dean completes his testimony by saying among other things that Kalmbach told him he had poured between \$200,000 and \$400,000 into an unsuccessful effort to defeat George Wallace in the 1970 race for governor of Alabama.

July 2—White House press secretary Ziegler says Nixon will speak out on Watergate as soon as the current phase of the Senate hearings ends. He emphasizes again that the President not appear before committee.

July 3—Julie Nixon Eisenhower says her father considered resigning because of the Watergate scandal but his family talked him out of it, saying resignation would amount to "admission of wrongdoing."

July 5—Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren says the White House doesn't attach importance to Julie Eisenhower's disclosure that her father once considered resignation.

July 7—Nixon formally advises the Senate committee he will not testify before it or grant it access to presidential papers. To do so would damage or destroy the powers of the presidency, he says.

July 10—Mitchell, testifying under subpoena before the Senate committee, denies Magruder's sworn testimony that Mitchell approved Liddy's plan to break in and bug Democratic headquarters. He says he always rejected Liddy's

plans and calls them "a complete horror story." Mitchell also:

- Denied he ever heard of the so-called White House "plumbers" until after the Watergate burglary.

- Conceded he had made major decisions in President Nixon's re-election campaign while he was still attorney general.

- Denied he ever saw wiretap logs, agreed to destruction of evidence or promised Magruder executive clemency in return for perjured testimony.

- Denied Dean's testimony that he made several suggestions about how to raise hush money for the Watergate burglars.

- Denied Stans' testimony that he authorized payments of large sums to Liddy.

- Said he concealed facts about the Watergate scandal from the President and helped "keep the lid on" because he was worried about Nixon's re-election.

July 11—In his second day of testimony, Mitchell says he would have condoned almost anything short of "treason and other high crimes" to see President Nixon safely re-elected last year.

July 12—Disputing a suggestion that he may have testified falsely, Mitchell tells senators they can judge for themselves his denials that he ever approved the wiretap raid on the Democrats.

President Nixon agrees to meet with Sen. Ervin, who says the committee wants to stave off "a fundamental constitutional crisis" over the President's refusal to release documents pertinent to its investigation.

Several hours after talking with Ervin, Nixon enters Bethesda Naval Medical Center for treatment of viral pneumonia. Doctors say he is "moderately ill."

July 16—Alexander P. Butterfield, former aide to Haldeman, tells Senate committee there have been sophisticated electronic bugs in all Nixon's offices and on all his telephones since 1970. He said they were installed by the secret service at Nixon's orders.

Kalmbach tells the Senate committee he raised money for the Watergate Seven on instructions of Ehrlichman and Dean. He says Ehrlichman looked him in the eyes, assured him the fund-raising assignment was a proper one and said to "go forward" with it.

July 17—Kalmbach says he felt like he had been "kicked in the stomach" when he learned Ehrlichman had taped a telephone conversation with him last April. In the transcript of the conversation, which had been turned over to the committee, Kalmbach recites at Ehrlichman's prodding certain details of testimony he was to give the grand jury the following day.

Nixon refuses to allow Secret Service agents to tell the Senate committee anything about how they recorded his conversations and telephone calls. The committee counters by asking the President to make the tapes available.

July 18—Ex-New York policeman Anthony T. Ulasevich tells committee he transferred \$219,000 from Kalmbach to intermediaries for the Watergate Seven while they were awaiting trial. He says support money demanded by the defendants had mounted to \$405,000.

LaRue tells committee he can't substantiate Mitchell's claim that he disapproved of the Liddy plan for the Watergate break-in and wiretap; neither can he confirm Magruder's claim that Mitchell approved the plan at a meeting at which LaRue was present.

July 19—Robert C. Mardian, former assistant attorney general and Nixon campaign official, tells the Senate committee he was told hours after the Watergate break-in that Mitchell had approved a budget for "dirty tricks" and Mitchell didn't deny it.

July 20 — Former White House aide Gordon Strachan, following Mardian in the witness chair, says he told Haldeman, his boss, in April, 1972, that the Nixon re-election committee had established a "sophisticated political intelligence gathering system."

President Nixon, released from Bethesda Naval Medical Center, tells White House staff: "Let others wallow in Watergate; we're going to do our job."

July 21 — Presidential aides say President Nixon is discontinuing the secret tapping of his phone calls and office conversations.

July 23 — Strachan testifies that Haldeman directed him to purge White House files of memoranda on political intelligence operations on the morning after the Watergate break-in. He says Haldeman told him: "We want to make sure our files are clean."

Nixon notifies Senate Watergate Committee and special prosecutor Cox he will not give them tapes of his recorded White House conversations. The committee issues and Cox obtains subpoenas for service on the President, demanding production of the tapes.

July 24—Ehrlichman begins testimony before the Senate committee. He says Nixon told him last March that a 1971 burglary committed by White House employees was "well within both the constitutional duty and obligation of the presidency." (Two months later, in a statement dated May 22, the President said he didn't authorize the burglary of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, didn't know about it until recently and would have disapproved of it had he known about it in advance.) Ehrlichman calls much of Dean's testimony false, particularly his assertion that Watergate was probably the major preoccupation in the White House between June 17 and Sept. 15, 1972. He says he spent only one-tenth of one percent of his time on political matters.

July 25 — Ehrlichman says in further testimony that Dean was "spinning tales" when he swore under oath that the Watergate Seven had been promised executive clemency with Nixon's approval. He tells the committee he was acting under Nixon's orders when he sounded out Federal Judge Matthew Byrne Jr. about becoming FBI director at the time Byrne was presiding at the Pentagon Papers trial of Daniel Ellsberg.

July 26 — In his third day of testimony, Ehrlichman says constant pressure from Nixon for information the FBI could not provide on Ellsberg led to formation of White House "plumbers" group that burglarized the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. He says there was "a certain amount of lassitude" on the part of the FBI to pursue investigation of Ellsberg. He continues to insist the burglary was fully within Nixon's constitutional authority to protect the nation's security.

Nixon rejects subpoenas from Senate committee and prosecutor Cox. Both move immediately to take the President into court for a showdown on his contention that executive privilege permits him to withhold tapes the investigators want. Judge Sirica sets 10 a.m. August 7 for White House to show cause why it does not respond to subpoenas.

Judge Byrne denies Ehrlichman's testimony that he showed "strong interest" in becoming FBI director while Pentagon Papers trial was in progress.

July 27 — Ehrlichman, in his fourth day before the committee, goes into activities of "dirty tricks" department of Nixon re-election committee. He says committee informers pursued Sen. Muskie's presidential campaign, infiltrated Muskie's closest council and fabricated a letter that led to Muskie's downfall as a presidential candidate. Ehrlichman stresses that all this is "hearsay, twice removed."

Ellsberg denies he gave copy of Pentagon Papers to Russian Embassy as Ehrlichman had testified the White House suspected him of having done.

July 27 — House Minority Leader Gerald Ford says Nixon listened to his Watergate tapes for almost 12 hours at Camp David the day after he was released from the hospital and overruled recommendations of his top advisers to release at least portions of them.

July 30 — Ehrlichman ends five days of testimony before Senate committee, insisting that neither he nor Nixon was involved in the Watergate cover-up.

Haldeman follows Ehrlichman in the witness chair. He startles Senate committee with disclosure that he had reviewed some disputed presidential tapes at home. He says:

- The tapes he heard disputed John Dean's contention that President Nixon was involved in the Watergate cover-up.

- He returned the tapes to the President, having made no notes of what he heard, and does not know if they still exist.

- Neither he nor the President had any knowledge of the Watergate affair or subsequent cover-up.

Committee chairman Ervin contends Haldeman's disclosures about the tapes removed them from President Nixon's claimed executive privilege to withhold them.

July 31 — Haldeman, continuing his testimony, acknowledges that he approved a \$90,000 Nixon re-election campaign budget for "black projects" but says he isn't sure what the projects were. Witnesses who appeared previously said the term was used in reference to political sabotage and campaign tricks. Haldeman says he doesn't recall ever being told of a \$300,000 budget for campaign intelligence gathering. He denies testimony of Strachan that he ordered destruction of a White House memo mentioning

the \$300,000 budget. He says he neither approved nor disapproved cash payments to Watergate Seven and their lawyers.

Aug. 1 — Haldeman admits he ordered post-election White House attempt to link Sen. George McGovern's presidential campaign to public demonstrations supported by what he called "foreign or Communist money." He says he understood there were facts to establish this but concedes he didn't know what the facts were.

Aug. 2 — Former CIA Director Richard Helms tells Senate committee how he resisted White House pressure to get the CIA involved in the cover-up.

Helms' former deputy at the CIA, Marine Commandant Robert E. Cushman Jr., tells committee a telephone call from Ehrlichman prompted him to rewrite a CIA memo which indirectly linked Ehrlichman to the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. The revised memo omitted the statement — which Cushman now insists is true — that Ehrlichman had sent Hunt to Cushman for a disguise and equipment used in the 1971 burglary.

Aug. 3 — Deputy CIA Director Vernon Walters says Haldeman ordered him to advise FBI that its investigation into Mexican money laundering scheme through which Watergate was financed might jeopardize an unrelated covert CIA operation; Walters says there was no CIA operation that could have been jeopardized.

Former FBI acting director Gray says he burned papers from Hunt's safe in White House because it was apparent to him that that was what Dean and Ehrlichman wanted him to do. He says he read some of the papers and scanned others first, though, and then lied about the incident to a U.S. Senator and to an assistant attorney general who questioned him about it.