

State Bars Studying Roles Of Nixon, 8 Other Lawyers

By Rayner Pike

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The professional conduct of President Nixon and at least eight other lawyers with varying roles in the Watergate case is being scrutinized by their state bar associations.

No actual disbarment proceedings have been initiated and the investigations have not reached the formal stages that are a preliminary to moving for disciplinary action.

The American Bar Association has adopted a resolution that called on its members to investigate the ethical conduct of lawyers involved in the Watergate affair.

Four bar associations have reported they are actively monitoring Watergate developments as they pertain to lawyers—the state bar associations of California, Massachusetts and Washington and the New York City association.

The lawyers under scrutiny of their state associations are President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Herbert Kalmbach, Charles Colson, Egil Krogh, Jr., Robert C. Mardian, Gordon C. Strachan, Donald Segretti and Gerald Alch.

Details of the inquiries and the conduct under examination could not be learned, since law and professional customs provide for confidentiality on such matters until a formal move to censure, suspend or disbar. When this occurs, the matter goes to the courts.

The head of the Massachusetts bar, however, emphasized that while a file has been opened on Alch, there was no evidence of illegal or unethical conduct against the former counsel of convicted Watergate burglar James McCord.

A New York City bar spokesman refused to com-

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ment beyond saying that Watergate hearings were being monitored and arrangements made to receive information developed by Washington investigators.

He would not comment on whether specific lawyers were under scrutiny.

Among key Watergate figures who practiced law in New York City were President Nixon and Strachan, a former White House aide, and former Attorney General John Mitchell. Mitchell is under criminal indictment in a case related to presidential campaign contributions.

Mr. Nixon and Strachan are among six named subjects of a California inquiry disclosed last week by Leonard S. Janofsky, the state bar president.

The others in California are Ehrlichman, the President's former chief domestic affairs adviser; Kalmbach, who was Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer; Mardian, former assistant attorney general for internal security, and Sagretti, a former Republican campaign aide accused of engineering "dirty tricks" against Democratic candidates.

The White House said after Janofsky's statement that it would have no comment.

Janofsky said the inquiry was undertaken on the basis of numerous complaints against Watergate principals lodged with the bar by individual lawyers.

He said the bar was breaking with its usual practice and making the investigation known because of legitimate public interest in the matter, but Janofsky stressed that the bar "has not prejudged any individual as to guilt or innocence."

Ehrlichman also has been named in formal complaints filed with the state of Washington's bar association,

along with Krogh, who at one time was Ehrlichman's assistant in the White House. Krogh has publicly taken responsibility for operations of the so-called plumbers, the undercover intelligence-gathering unit that performed burglaries.

The president of the Washington bar, Charles I. Stone, of Seattle, said Ehrlichman and Krogh could be subject to disciplinary proceedings regardless of the outcome of the Watergate affair, but he kept the details of the complaints confidential.

The Massachusetts Bar Association said it has begun compiling files on Colson, a presidential counsel who purportedly fostered the White House "enemies list," and Alch, who represented McCord when McCord was prosecuted for breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate building complex.

Alch, subsequently fired by McCord, appeared before the Senate Watergate committee to deny some of McCord's testimony, including an allegation that he suggested McCord blame the CIA for the Watergate break-in.

"There has been absolutely no evidence of wrongdoing or breach of ethical conduct on the part of Mr. Alch," said Carl Modecki, executive director of the Massachusetts bar.

"We are merely compiling files. This is standard procedure whenever a lawyer gets in the news for possible wrongdoing," Modecki said.

He added, without elaboration: "Serious allegations have been made against Mr. Colson."

The chief counsel to the New York City bar's grievance committee, John Bonomi, declining to name any lawyers, said: "I can tell you that we are monitoring the hearings."

He said he has met with both Terry Lenzer, assistant chief counsel of the Senate Watergate committee, and Philip Lacovera, counsel to special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox. Bonomi

said the purpose of the meetings was "to see to it that arrangements are made so that any information indicating misconduct developed in either one of those inquiries" is forwarded to the appropriate bar association.

The city bar association obtained the disbarment of one of the convicted Watergate burglars, G. Gordon Liddy, two months ago. The state courts acted routinely on the association's request under a law making disbarment mandatory for a convicted felon.