

Courts Busy With Watergate

By Sanford J. Ungar
Washington Post Staff Writer

"The time has come to turn Watergate over to the courts," said President Nixon last month as he appealed to the country to direct its attention to other "urgent business."

Without any special prod- ing from the White House, the Watergate affair has indeed been turned over to the federal and state courts, which seem likely to be pre- occupied with the scandal for years to come.

Quite apart from the Sen- ate hearings that resume here later this month, crimi- nal trials and investigations related to Watergate are pending in New York, Wash- ington, Los Angeles, Hous- ton, Tampa, Annapolis and Baltimore.

And despite Mr. Nixon's plea that the American peo- ple not harbor a "backward- looking obsession" with Watergate, any or all of the judicial proceedings could lead to new disclosures and keep the controversy before the public.

These are the pending cases:

New York—Former Attor- ney General John N. Mitch- ell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans are scheduled to go on trial Tuesday on charges that they sought to impede a Se- curities and Exchange Com- mission probe in exchange for a secret \$200,000 contri- bution to the 1972 Nixon campaign by financier Rob- ert L. Vesco, and that they lied to a federal grand jury about the matter.

Harry L. Sears, a former New Jersey Republican state senator who allegedly served as an intermediary in the Vesco affair, is also charged in the case and has been granted a separate, later trial.

Vesco himself, now living in Costa Rica, is being sought as a fugitive and could also be tried later if apprehended by U.S. author- ities.

In addition, the grand jury that indicted Mitchell, Stans, Sears and Vesco last May has never been dis- missed and could hear fur- ther evidence connected with the case.

Washington—Under the supervision of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archi- bald Cox, two federal grand juries are sitting, one focus- ing on the break-in at Demo- cratic National Committee headquarters at the Water- gate on June 17, 1972, the other on Republican "dirty tricks" and financing during the 1972 presidential cam-

paign, the controversy in- volving the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. and the burglary by the White House "plumbers" at the Los Angeles office of Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist.

As a result of the renewed investigation that followed the conviction of the origi- nal seven Watergate con- spirators last January, two former Nixon campaign offi-

cial have entered guilty pleas, Frederick C. LaRue to a count of conspiracy to ob- struct justice and Jeb Stuart Magruder to a count that in- cludes that charge, defraud- ing the United States and wiretapping.

LaRue and Magruder could, as a result of their guilty pleas, testify for the government at a new, major Watergate trial.

The scope of the new Watergate indictments may depend on whether Cox suc- ceeds in obtaining release of secret tape recordings of the President's conversations in his office and on the tele- phone.

Mr. Nixon has refused to honor subpoenas for the tapes issued by Cox's grand jury and the Senate Water- gate committee, and the Su- preme Court is expected to receive the constitutional dispute on the tapes early in its new term.

Also pending in federal court are several civil law- suits growing out of the Watergate burglary, includ- ing those brought by the Democratic National Com- mittee against the Nixon campaign and by Stans against former Democratic National Chairman Law- rence O'Brien.

Several separate indict- ments could emerge from

the grand jury probing the "dirty tricks" and other mat- ters.

Los Angeles—Former White House domestic af- fairs chief John D. Ehrlich- man and three others, in- cluding Watergate conspira- tor G. Gordon Liddy, were indicted by a Los Angeles County grand jury last week on burglary and conspiracy charges in connection with a break-in two years ago at the office of a psychiatrist who had treated Daniel Ells- berg, the man who disclosed the top-secret Pentagon Pa- pers.

Their trial in state court is expected to focus atten- tion on the Nixon adminis- tration's view of what con- duct, ordinarily illegal, can be justified in the name of "national security."

Houston—A federal grand jury is investigating a \$100,000 contribution to the Nixon re-election campaign, part of which was allegedly used to finance the Water- gate break-in.

Tampa—Donald H. Se- gretti, a "dirty trickster" in the Nixon campaign, is scheduled for trial in Octo- ber on two counts of fabri- cating and distributing a let- ter designed to undermine the campaigns of three Democratic aspirants in the 1972 Florida presidential pri- mary.

Cases

The grand jury in Orlando which indicted Segretti and a lawyer who assisted him is still in session, and Segret- ti's activities are also under scrutiny in Washington.

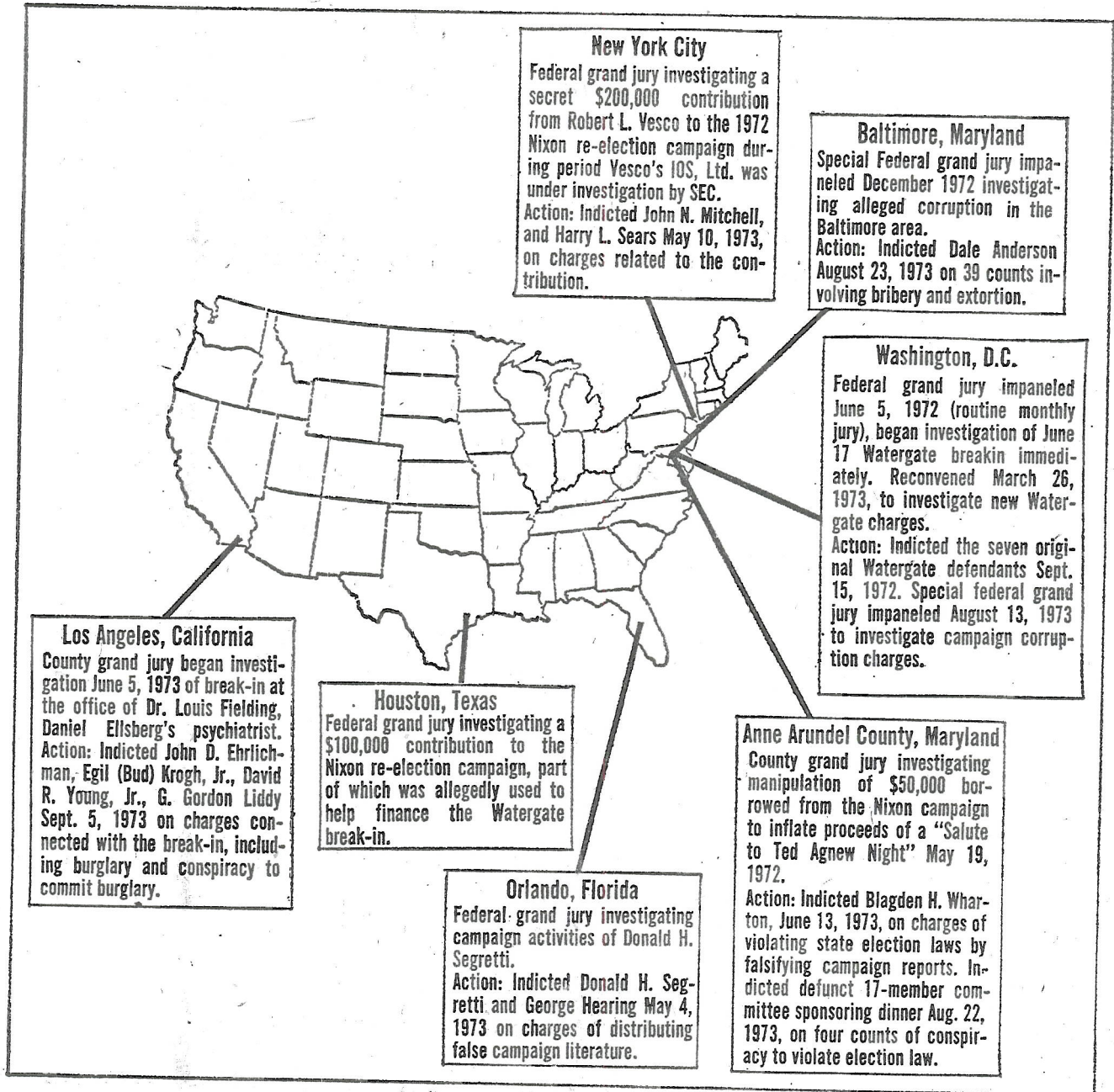
Annapolis—Blagden H. Wharton, a Maryland banker, is scheduled for trial later this month in Anne Arundel County Cir- cuit Court on charges of perjury and falsification of campaign reports concern- ing a fund-raising dinner for Vice President Spiro T. Ag- new in May, 1972.

Baltimore—A federal grand jury investigation is continuing into allegations that several present and for- mer Baltimore County offi- cials, possibly including Ag- new, accepted bribes and kickbacks from engineering and consulting firms.

Dale Anderson, who suc- ceeded Agnew as county ex- ecutive in 1966, has already been indicted on charges that include conspiracy, and President Nixon has asked U.S. Attorney Genral Elliot L. Richardson to rule on the constitutionality of a judi- cial investigation of a sit- ting Vice President.

Also pending in Washing- ton, and perhaps other cit- ies, are federal investiga- tions of illegal corporate and personal contributions to the Nixon and other pres- idential campaigns in 1972.

New York investment banker John L. Loeb pleaded no contest and was fined \$3,000 in June for vio- lating the new federal elec- tion law by coercing employ- ees to contribute to the ef- fort of Sen. Hubert H. Hum- phrey (D-Minn.) to win the Democratic presidential nomination last year.



Courts in five states and the District of Columbia are working on cases growing out of Watergate