

Dean Pleads Guilty--Deal On Immunity

Washington

John W. Dean III, the former counsel to President Nixon, pleaded guilty yesterday to plotting to cover up the truth about the Watergate break-in.

He made his plea as part of a bargain with the special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, under which Dean agreed to be a prosecution witness in future proceedings against alleged participants in the coverup — including, potentially, proceedings against President Nixon.

Cox allowed Dean to plead guilty before Judge John J. Sirica in U.S. District court here to a single felony count of conspiracy to obstruct justice and defraud the U.S., punishable by a maximum five-year prison term and a \$10,000 fine, with sentencing deferred until the bargain is kept.

Cox also promised not to prosecute Dean for any other Watergate-related crime, reserving only the right to prosecute the lawyer for any perjury that may be discovered in the future.

In return, Dean gave up

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his long fight for total immunity from prosecution and pledged his "complete cooperation" with the Cox prosecution.

CRUCIAL

Dean is considered the crucial witness against a number of former high officials in the White House and in the Nixon re-election campaign, including John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general, and H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, the former presidential aides.

Beyond that, he is the key witness in any potential proceeding against the Presi-

dent.

For in his testimony before the Senate Watergate committee last June, Dean swore that Mr. Nixon had participated in the coverup of the break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters on June 17, 1972.

Dean told the committee that the President had said that \$1 million would not be too much to pay to those arrested for the break-in to keep them silent. The President, Dean went on, offered executive clemency in return for silence.

JOB

Dean said that Mr. Nixon had congratulated him on the "good job" he had done in limiting the authorities' investigation of the break-in.

This testimony has been denied and the prosecutors' search for confirmation has led to the confrontation between the President and the prosecutor over the White House tape recordings.

The conspiracy to thwart the investigation, according to the formal charges read by Sirica, was carried out in various ways: suborning perjury, and giving and concealing evidence, in the trial before Sirica last winter of the men arrested in the break-in; offers of clemency to the defendants; payments (totaling about \$450,000, a Cox aide said later) to keep the arrested men silent; requests to the FBI or information — attempts to get the CIA to put up the hush money.

In furtherance of the conspiracy, Sirica continued, Dean had committed six specific acts: among other things, the judge read, Dean had asked the deputy director of the CIA whether the CIA could use "cover funds" to pay the bail and salaries of the arrested men.

ACTS

The list of overt acts itself indicated the additional crimes for which Dean could have been prosecuted — one act, for instance, was his meeting with Jeb Stuart Magruder of the Nixon campaign staff to arrange for Magruder's perjured testimony before the grand jury, an act which could have led to Dean's prosecution for

suborning perjury.

Mr. Nixon fired Dean last spring. At that point and for months to come, the lawyer held out for a full grant of immunity from prosecution before he would agree to testify, saying he refused to be made the "scapegoat." The Senate gave him immunity from prosecution based on the use of his Senate testimony, but Cox held out, insisting on the same bargain that Dean accepted yesterday.

In a written statement distributed after court recessed, Dean explained: "Events have resolved that matter, and I have confidence that I cannot and will not be made the scapegoat," he said, adding that he probably could have escaped conviction on "legal technicalities," but that that would have been a "shallow victory."

New York Times



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JOHN DEAN III AND WIFE MAUREEN
They left U.S. District Court hand in hand yesterday