

The reply of Archibald Cox

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Here is the full text of a statement issued by Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox last night on President Nixon's decision in the Watergate tapes case:

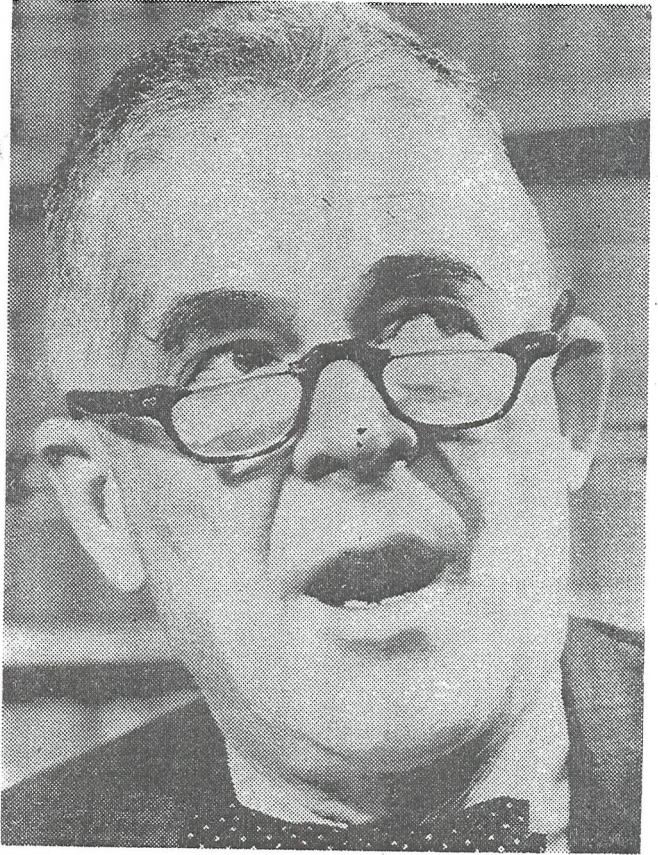
In my judgment, the president is refusing to comply with the court decrees. A summary of the content of the tapes lacks the evidentiary value of the tapes themselves. No steps are being taken to turn over the important notes, memoranda and other documents that the court orders require. I shall bring these points to the attention of the court and abide by its decision.

The president's directions to make no further attempts by the judicial process to obtain tapes, notes or memoranda of presidential conversations will apply to all such matters in the future.

These directions would apply not only to the so-called Watergate investigation but all matters within my jurisdiction.

The instructions are in violation of the promises which the attorney general made to the Senate when his nomination was confirmed. For me to comply to those instructions would violate my solemn pledge to the Senate and the country to invoke judicial process to challenge exaggerated claims of executive privilege. I shall not violate my promise.

Acceptance of these directions would also defeat the fair administration of criminal justice. It would deprive prosecutors of admissible evidence in prosecuting wrongdoers who abused high government office. It would also enable defendants to go free, by withholding material a judge ruled necessary to a fair trial. The president's action already threatens this result in the New York prosecution of John Mitchell and Maurice Stans. I cannot be a party to such an arrangement.



ARCHIBALD COX

'For me to comply . . . would violate my solemn pledge'

—UPI Photo

I shall have a more complete statement in the near future.