

# Fuss Over Who Owns Haldeman Files

Washington

The White House would not say yesterday who owns the files that H. R. Haldeman left behind but apparently continued to control after he resigned as President Nixon's chief of staff last April 30.

Lawrence M. Higby, who served as Haldeman's deputy and who is still on the White House payroll, testified in U.S. District Court Tuesday that Haldeman in recent days had directed him by telephone on which documents to remove and did not disclose until two weeks ago the combination to the lock that secured the files.

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald Warren was asked yesterday who owns the files and what influence Haldeman continues to exercise in the White House.

Warren declined to discuss the files, saying that was a matter before the courts, but he said that except for Higby, "there is no one in the White House whom Haldeman is giving instructions to."

For weeks, there have been indications that Haldeman has maintained contacts with the White House. He has reportedly talked on a number of occasions with

the President and members of the staff by telephone.

Warren sought to minimize the contacts that have continued between Haldeman and the President, saying they have spoken by telephone "very rarely."

He was also asked about Ronald Ziegler, the President's press secretary who had taken orders from Haldeman when he was Mr. Nixon's chief of staff.

"I don't think Ron has talked to him more than four or five times," Warren replied.

There have been no suggestions that Haldeman has been attempting to run the government, rather that he and the President might be coordinating their defenses in the Watergate case.

For a few weeks after he left the White House, Haldeman and former presidential assistant John Ehrlichman were given access to their files and offices in which to work on their defense. For a time during that period, the FBI had agents stationed in the White House to make sure files were not removed.

Alexander M. Haig Jr., who succeeded Haldeman as chief of staff, testified in federal district court here yesterday that he was "very disturbed" last July when he

learned that Haldeman had taken tape recordings from the White House and listened to them.

He also testified that when Haldeman left the White House he told Haig that he had ordered a new combination for the safe that held his files. Haig said he asked Haldeman to leave the combination with the President but that apparently he had not done so. Haldeman supplied the combination only a few days ago after

Haig called him personally and asked for it, according to Higby.

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