

Nixon's Lawyers Working Long Hours on Watergate

By Ann Blackman

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They call themselves "The Firm." Their secretary answers the telephone "Legal Group." Photographs of The Client decorate their office walls.

President Nixon's lawyers have yet to hang their shingle on the White House fence, but they're working almost around the clock to defend their client against a seeming myriad of charges in the Watergate case.

"A lawyer doesn't have this opportunity very often," said K. Gregory Haynes, 28, an assistant U.S. attorney in Northern Virginia before being reassigned from the Justice Department to the White House. "It's an opportunity to work in a case that involves constitutional questions of enormous significance . . . a landmark case."

New Ones Hired

Haynes, a native of Louisville, Ky., Richard Alan Hauser and George P. (Skip) Williams are on the team of White House lawyers organized under the direction of White House counsel J. Fred Buzhardt and Leonard Garment. Some of the Presi-

dent's original Watergate lawyers have returned to their old jobs, and new lawyers have been hired.

Haynes, Hauser and Williams are among the younger members of President Nixon's current 10-man legal team. At White House request, they were detailed to Mr. Nixon's legal staff last summer from the Justice Department, which still pays their \$19,000-to-\$23,000 salaries.

In recent interviews, they said their jobs have ranged from what they would normally consider menial work for a lawyer, summarizing and indexing testimony from the Watergate hearings to preparation of witnesses for cross-examination and writing portions of legal briefs.

See Unfairness

"We're looking at the Watergate testimony as lawyers who have had trial experience," said Hauser, 30, a native of Litchfield, Ill., who studied law in Miami and was a Florida federal prosecutor before coming to Washington and the Justice Department. "We know fact from hearsay. We saw there was a lot of unfair criticism

of the President that was not supported factually in testimony."

Hauser said his job does not involve discussing legal problems with Mr. Nixon. "It's not our purpose to meet with the President," he said. "We work for Fred Buzhardt. He has access to the President."

But the young lawyers have spent long days in U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica's courtroom listening to White House aides try to explain what happened in the White House tapes case. They've learned quickly that defending the President of the United States in court isn't just a legal problem.

"You have to take a much broader perspective in mak-

ing legal decisions . . ." said Williams, a 29-year-old Chicagoan who worked for the civil division of the Justice Department. "It includes everything from public opinion . . . to politics."

If Haynes, Hauser and Williams have any reservations about how the Watergate case is being handled, they don't say so publicly. Their main concern is that their client receives the best defense possible.

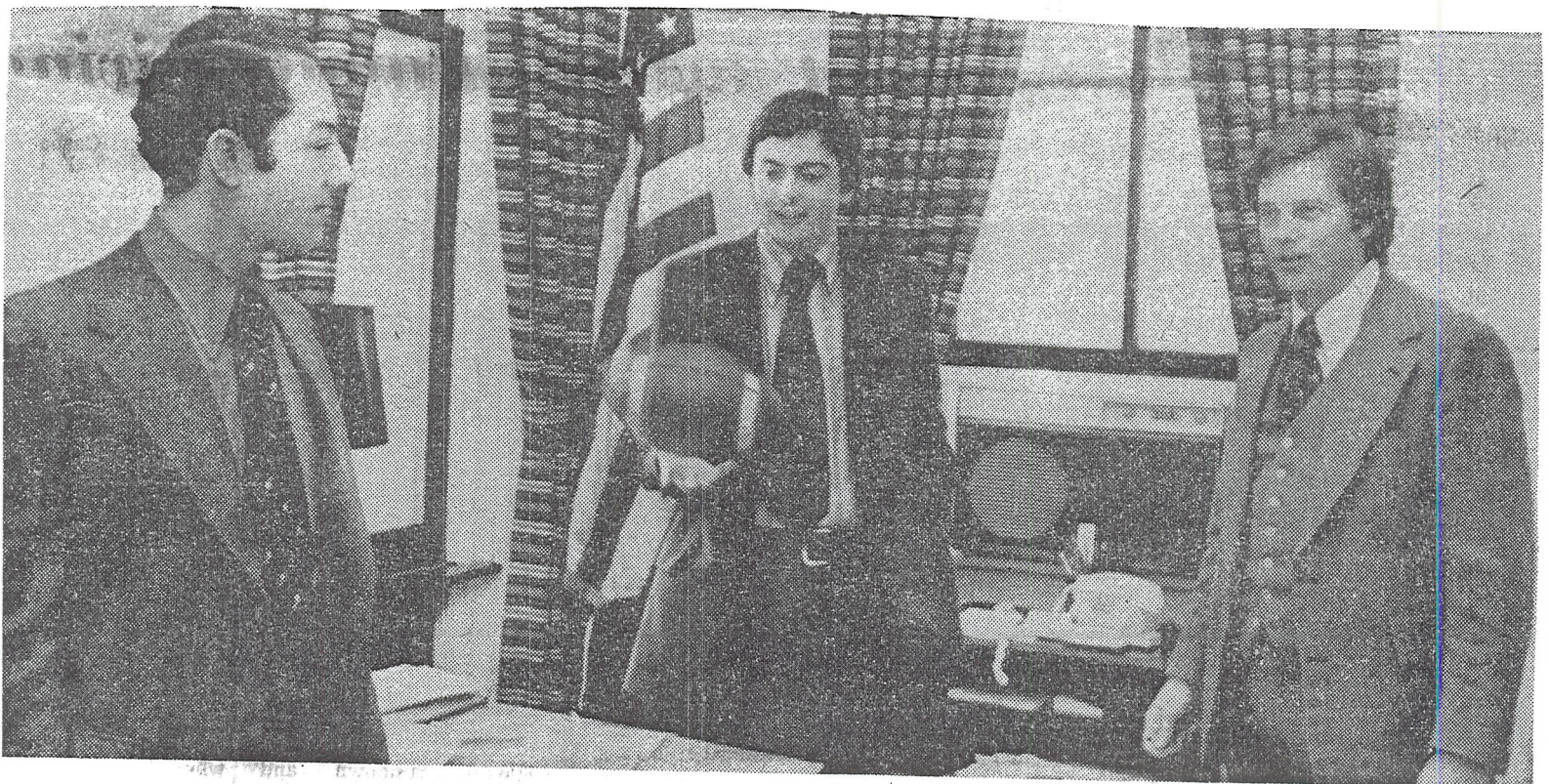
The job has some frustrations for bright, young, impatient men. During the tapes hearings, Haynes, Hauser and Williams spent most of their time warming seats at the defense table while more senior White

House counsel, or the young, eye-catching assistant special prosecutors, Richard Ben-Veniste and Jill Wine Volner, did the questioning.

Feels Honored

They resent relatives, friends, acquaintances and law professors who sometimes suggest they have joined the wrong side. "That just makes me furious," Haynes said. "It's an honor to work here. Few lawyers get to work for a client as important or significant as the President."

"He deserves the best effort one can give," Hauser said. "Some people look on the White House as the kiss of death these days. I don't."



George Williams, left, K. Gregory Haynes and Richard Hauser—three of Mr. Nixon's younger lawyers discuss their work, and the sport scene.

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