

Jaworski Verifies Watergate Talks

Washington

Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor, confirmed yesterday reports that his office has had discussions with key figure under investigation.

Aides of the prosecutor later indicated that those discussions could lead to plea bargaining.

The prosecutor's office insisted that the statements — made yesterday on the National Broadcasting Company's Today show — do not mean plea bargaining is under way.

However, it is known that Jaworski has told his staff — repeated to newsmen last week — that he hopes to have the prosecution "wrapped up" within three months. This timetable indicates the hope that he can avoid lengthy court battles.

Few observers familiar with the investigation believe such a timetable can

be met without some sort of plea bargaining.

Plea bargaining became a familiar term in the weeks preceding former Vice President Spiro Agnew's resignation.

As in that case, a person facing possible indictment and criminal charges can sometimes enter into an agreement to submit to some of the possible charges and avoid trial on others. Negotiations involved in plea bargaining can involve agreements to furnish evidence against others under investigation in return for consideration in the prospective indictee's own case.

Rumors of plea bargaining circulated widely in Washington last week when it was learned that John D. Ehrlichman, known to be under investigation for his activities while serving as domestic adviser to President

Nixon during the Watergate scandal, had visited Jaworski with his attorneys.

Following these reports, Jaworski confirmed the meetings and said discussions had been held, but added: "No offer has been made to Mr. Ehrlichman by this office."

A spokesman for Jaworski's office turned aside questions about possible plea bargaining by specific people thought to be under investigation by saying:

"The special prosecutor refuses to comment on any specific case which might be under consideration by his office. We do not institute plea bargaining with anyone."

The subject was revived after Jaworski had the following exchange with Carl Stern and Bill Monroe on the Today show:

Stern: "Are you now engaged in plea bargaining sessions with prospective indictees, shall we say?"

Jaworski: "Carl, if you asked me if I have some discussions I will go that far. I'm not going to identify any individual. It wouldn't be fair."

Stern: "It's more than one. Is that correct?"

Jaworski: "I would say that it's fair to say that it's more than one, yes, sir."

Stern: "Persons whose names are household words?"

Jaworski: "Let's say that their names are known to you and known to those who have listened to you."

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