

# Watergate Lawyer Queries the Legion



Jack Anderson

THE WATERGATE prosecutors have been investigating, of all groups, the American Legion on suspicion that the White House used Legionnaires to stand up to left-wing demonstrators.

To the bewilderment of National Adjutant William Hauck, who has been a determinedly nonpartisan friend of Presidents since 1952, he was called in for interrogation by the prosecutors.

Hauck duly appeared before a stern, young lawyer named Nick Ackerman who, ironically, won the American Legion "Voice of Democracy" award at high school in 1965. Ackerman wanted to know whether the White House had tried to get the Legion to bus in members for the funeral of J. Edgar Hoover.

The prosecutors apparently thought the White House tried to recruit Legionnaires to square off with left-wing demonstrators at the funeral, thereby stirring up sentiment against President Nixon's enemies on the left. It's known that the Cuban Watergate burglary team was sent to squabble with the demonstrators.

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THE LONG-SUFFERING Hauck was also interrogated about the Legion's history and its stand on the Pentagon Papers case.

Hauck confided to us that he was "dumfounded" at the questioning. Nevertheless, he patiently denied that the White House had contacted the Legion about the Hoover funeral or meddled in Legion policies.

He also checked with other top Legion-

naires and wrote a private letter to Ackerman, stating they also had received no call "urging the influx of busloads of American Legionnaires to attend Mr. Hoover's funeral."

At the Watergate Special Prosecutor's office, a spokesman said it was "absolutely wrong" to say the Legion was under investigation. "We have asked many patriotic Americans to cooperate with us and regret very much that anyone would assume this meant we were investigating them," said the spokesman.

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IN A RECENT column, we reported that Representative Edward Hutchinson (Rep-Mich.) was directing a secret attempt to obstruct the House Judiciary Committee's inquiry into the impeachment of President Nixon. He loudly denied that he had asked GOP staff members to do any such thing.

As one of the committee's senior Republicans, he also served on a special subcommittee which investigated whether to impeach Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in 1970. The subcommittee found no impeachable conduct.

But Hutchinson was the lone dissenter. He objected that the report was written "without taking a word of testimony under oath." Now, he has done an about-face. He sees no need, he told us, to take the President's testimony. "It isn't necessary to compel him to be a witness," Hutchinson said, "but if he wants to testify, he should be accorded that right."