

# Nixon's Lawyer Says There's

Washington

White House lawyer James D. St. Clair said yesterday it has yet to be proved there was any conspiracy to pay hush money to Watergate burglary defendants, and that President Nixon "probably" misspoke last week when he said he

was once told there was.

St. Clair, interviewed by ABC-TV news, also said that some White House documents were found to have segments snipped out of them by someone who acted some time before last May.

Mr. Nixon told a news conference last week that his

former personal White House lawyer, John W. Dean III, told him on March 21, 1973, that payments had been made to buy the silence of the seven original Watergate defendants.

This contradicted a statement by Mr. Nixon on Aug. 22, 1973, when he said that

## No Proof of Hush Money

Dean had told him in the March 21 meeting that money had been provided the defendants by White House and re-election committee operatives, but that the money was to support their families and pay for their lawyers — not to buy their silence.

ABC reporter Tom Jarriel asked St. Clair if Mr. Nixon misspoke in last week's account.

"To the extent that it apparently has been so construed, I would say probably he did," St. Clair said. "But again, I think it should be made clear that this matter

is yet to be proved."

His comment about proof referred to an earlier statement in the interview in which he said no one has yet been found innocent or guilty in relation to any alleged illegal payments to the defendants.

*United Press*