

Colson Is First in Nixon Circle To Admit Guilt in Watergate

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By ANTHONY RIPLEY JUN 4 1974

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WASHINGTON, June 3— Charles W. Colson became today the only member of President Nixon's inner circle of four former domestic and political advisers to have pleaded guilty and to have agreed to work with the prosecutors in the Watergate scandals.

Forty-four men and 13 corporations have been charged thus far with Watergate-related crimes. Twenty-nine men and 12 corporations have pleaded guilty, five men have been cleared and there are at least five major trials to go.

But, among the men who served as campaign workers, political aides and Presidential appointees, Mr. Colson's name heads the list of 14 who now stand guilty, 11 by their own admission. A half dozen more in this category now await trial.

As a White House trouble shooter and liaison man with lobbyists and other outsiders, Mr. Colson's activities cut across a wide range of matters under investigation by Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor.

Access to Nixon

Along with John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General; H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, the President's former chief adviser on domestic affairs, Mr. Colson was a member of the inner circle with direct and unquestioned access to Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Colson's guilty plea today, along with the offer of a similar arrangement refused earlier by Mr. Ehrlichman, suggested to many observers that

Mr. Jaworski was prepared to negotiate pleas with every figure in the case.

Mr. Jaworski has told associates that he believes it is in the national interest to resolve the Watergate matter and that a negotiated plea would serve the same interest as a jury verdict, which carries with it a chance of even harsher penalties.

Until today, John W. Dean 3d, the President's former counsel, and Herbert W. Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's former personal attorney and a chief political fund-raiser, were the closest that the prosecutor had come to Mr. Nixon's inner circle.

Mr. Dean pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice last Oct. 19 and is awaiting sentencing while cooperating with the investigators.

Magruder's Role

Jeb Stuart Magruder, who was sentenced on May 21 to 10 to 30 months in prison after pleading guilty last Aug. 16 to the same charge that Mr. Dean pleaded to, was deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President and knew of the plans to burglarize the Democratic party's national headquarters and of the subsequent cover-up.

Frederick C. LaRue, who pleaded guilty last June 27 to the same charge, and Herbert L. Porter, who pleaded guilty last Jan. 28 of lying to agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and was sentenced to 30 days in prison, were lower-level officials at the re-election committee with some knowledge of the cover-up.