

SFChronicle

JUN 20 1974

# Petersen Admits They Were Fooled

## Washington

Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, conceding that prosecutors initially were "snookered" by the lies of Watergate higher-ups, yesterday emotionally defended their investigation as right, proper and thorough.

"By God, give us a break!" he shouted at Senator Sam J. Ervin (Dem-N.C.), pounding the witness table with his fist. "You're being unfair!"

Petersen erupted at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the nomination of Earl J. Silbert to be U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, Silbert was chief of the three-man prosecution team that handled the original Watergate bugging case until a year ago.

Petersen, as chief of the Justice Department's criminal division, supervised their work, which has been criticized for failing to link the Watergate burglars to White House and Nixon campaign officials.

Questioning Petersen for nearly two hours, Ervin, chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, needled him for not digging hard enough to find the truth.

"If you mean we accepted

## Woodward Voted for Nixon

### New York

Martha Mitchell yesterday got Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward, a registered Republican and one of the reporters responsible for breaking the Watergate story, to admit that he voted for Richard Nixon in 1968.

Mrs. Mitchell added that Woodward probably was a "better" Republican than she because her itinerant lifestyle had made it difficult for her to vote in the last few years.

"Come on," Mrs. Mitchell prodded Woodward. "You voted for Richard Nixon in '68, didn't you?"

Woodward nodded affirmatively to the delight of Mrs. Mitchell, who interviewed Woodward and his colleague Carl Bernstein on CBS-TV's "Pat Collins Show."

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the lies all those people told, I guess we did," Petersen snapped. "We were snookered."

He said he had "suspicions" all along that the case went higher than the seven men prosecuted and convicted, but could not prove his hunches nor disprove the testimony of Jeb Stuart Magruder and others that he doubted.

Although he did not suspect White House involvement at that time, Petersen said, he was "upset . . . because there was an absence of leadership" and a seeming unconcern as the trial led to criminal involvement by aides in President Nixon's campaign organization.

"I was ashamed of my suspicions," he said. "I'd say, 'John Mitchell must have known.' But people would say, 'he wouldn't do that.'"

"I used to feel guilty suggesting to (Attorney General Richard Kleindienst that maybe other people were involved."

He said he found "incredible" — but could not disprove — stories by top campaign aides that the huge sums of money given to bugging conspirator G. Gordon Liddy were for legitimate intelligence purposes.

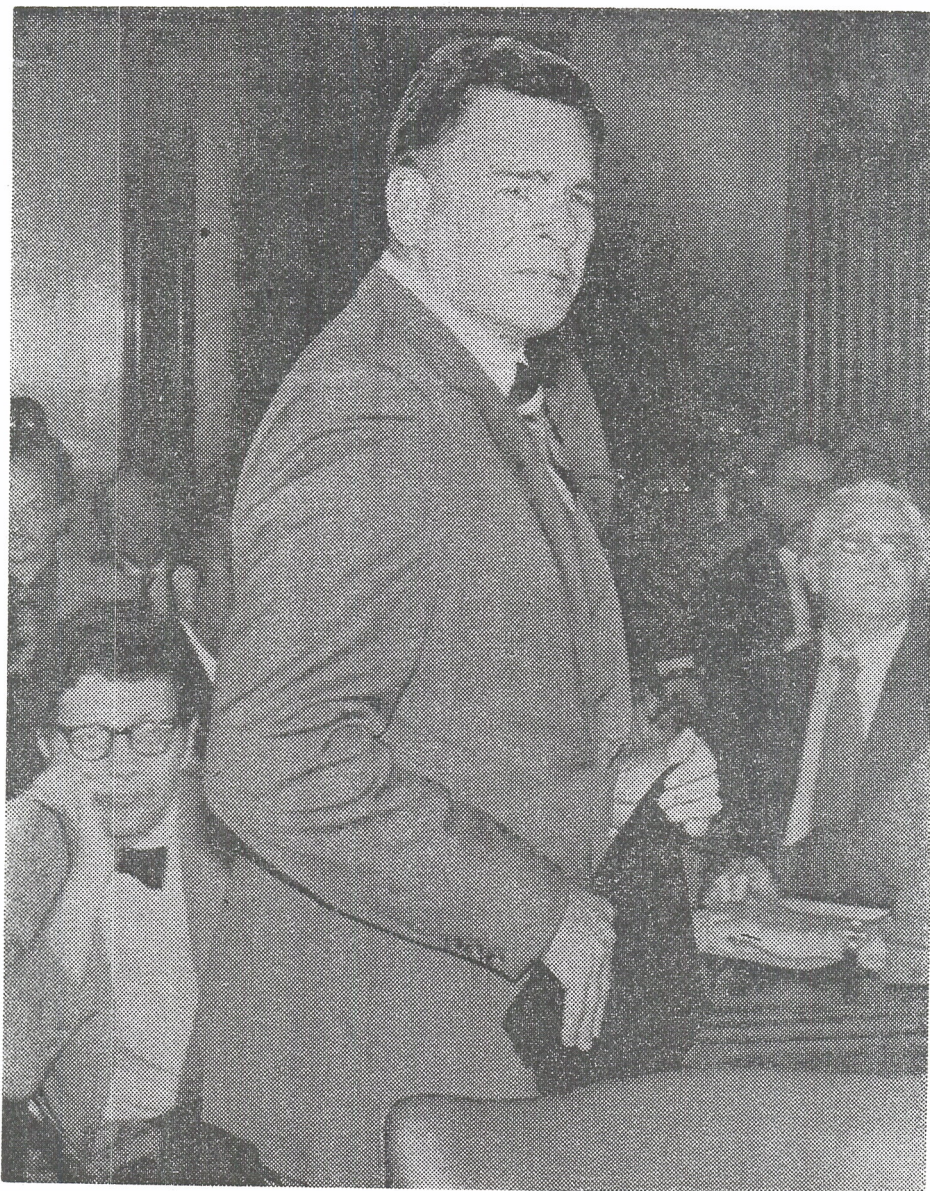
Petersen said that since the prosecutors were unable to trace the conspiracy beyond Liddy during the summer of 1972, they decided to prosecute the seven men and reopen the grand jury investigation once they were convicted.

He flared when Ervin suggested he had been too gentle with high officials by allowing several of them — including former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans — to give sworn statements rather than appear before the grand jury.

"I don't deal gently and I resent that implication," Petersen said.

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*AP Wirephoto*

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY PETERSEN  
**'My God, give us a break!' he shouted to Senator Ervin**