

New Ehrlichman Link to Break-In

Washington

Egil Krogh Jr. testified yesterday that John D. Ehrlichman gave a "go ahead" on the eve of the 1971 Ellsberg break-in and told him months later he had been less than candid with the FBI about the case.

Krogh, co-director of the White House Plumbers special investigative unit and just out of prison, gave the five-day-old trial's most damaging testimony about Ehrlichman, his patron and friend of 23 years.

Ehrlichman and three others are on trial for conspiracy in connection with the Plumbers' attempt to get incriminating psychiatric information about Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg.

Associate Watergate prosecutor William H. Merrill led Krogh through a long series of meetings, memos and calls between the two in July and August just before the Labor Day weekend break-in, and in March and April, 1973, when the break-in became public knowledge.

On April 27, 1973 — three days before Ehrlichman resigned as President Nixon's top domestic adviser — Krogh said Ehrlichman called him in Miami saying he had been interviewed by the FBI.

"He said he had had to dissemble somewhat with them," Krogh testified. "It meant to me to be somewhat

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less than candid or not tell everything about the subject under investigation."

Krogh told of making a call to Ehrlichman at the end of August, 1971, after E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, masterminds of the operation, had returned from a "feasibility" study of the target — the Los Angeles office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis J. Fielding.



AP Wirephoto

EGIL KROGH JR.
Phone call recounted

"It was made from my office. We conveyed to him, as I understood it, he was at Cape Cod, we conveyed to him, we thought the operation — I'm not sure of the words we used, it was an open line — could be conducted, all the conditions had been met, we thought this was something we could do," Krogh testified.

"I recall his listening and asking Young (David R. Young Jr., the other plumber co-director, who was on an extension), 'Do you agree with this?' We both gave out independent assurance.

"I don't recall other than I felt it had been approved as authorized. He gave the authority to go ahead, yes."

Neither Krogh nor Young has testified they used the term "break-in" in describing to Ehrlichman the so-called "covert operation" for Ellsberg's data.

Ehrlichman testified at the Senate Watergate hearings last summer he approved a "covert operation" in a memo Aug. 11, 1971 — a central part of the evidence in this trial—but "certainly did not" know it referred to breaking and entering.

Krogh testified, however, that "it was clear to me ... an entry operation would be necessary to exam-

ine" the files Fielding's possession.

Krogh said that "very shortly" after the break-in, he showed Ehrlichman photos verifying that Fielding's office had been ransacked to make it appear the burglary was "a drug rip-off."

"Ehrlichman expressed great surprise it had taken place, it was excessive," Krogh testified. "He was very upset. He agreed no further operations of this kind were to be undertaken and I was to so instruct Hunt and Liddy," who had proposed a follow-up entry at Fielding's apartment.

Krogh said that in the mid-April, 1973, Ehrlichman called to tell him "the President was aware of what had taken place in California and that he (the President) considered it a matter of the highest national security and I was not to answer questions about it," Krogh testified.

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