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**Dean Indicates Nixon Discussed Fund
For Burglars Before March 21, 1973**

By Seymour M. Hersh

WASHINGTON, July 25 — John W. Dean 3d said in testimony released today that he may have discussed the raising of \$1-million for the Watergate burglars with President Nixon at least once before March 21, 1973, the date on which Mr. Nixon says he first learned of proposals to make such payments.

The new information arose when Mr. Dean again sought to explain why he mistakenly placed the date of that discussion as March 13 in his Senate Watergate committee testimony last year. He error was brought up again two weeks ago by James D. St. Clair during Mr. Dean's day-long appearance before the House Judiciary Committee.

"I still—harobr the impression and the recollection that I had discussed money with the President preceding the 21st," Mr. Dean, the dismissed White House counsel, told the President's personal Watergate attorney then.

Asked later about the matter by Representative Robert McClory of Illinois, a ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, Mr. Dean again said that "it's my strong impression that we did have some discussions of money" before March 21. However, he acknowledged, he was unable to fix the date of that discussion precisely.

The 64 taped conversations that the White House agreed to turn over to the special Watergate prosecutor after yesterday's Supreme Court ruling include two subpoenaed Presidential meetings with Mr. Dean between March 13 and March 1, 1973—raising the possibility that those tapes may include definitive evidence on whether the President had prior knowledge of payments to E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the convicted burglars.

'As High as \$1-million'

In his Senate testimony, Mr. Dean said he had told the President on March 13 that "it might be as high as \$1-million or more" to meet the demands of Mr. Hunt and the other convicted Watergate conspirators demands Mr. Nixon has insisted were for legal and family expenses, not "hush money."

Mr. Dean then testified that

the President "told me that that was no problem, and he also looked over at Haldeman and repeated the same statement."

H. R. Haldeman, then the White House chief of staff, was one of the seven former Nixon aides indicted in the Watergate cover-up.

After the White House supplied an edited version of the March 21 tape to the Watergate prosecutors, Mr. Dean changed his testimony.

In his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, his first published statements since the release of the White House transcripts, Mr. Dean emphasized that he always thought "the President was in charge" during their various meetings about the Watergate cover-up.

During one exchange with Mr. St. Clair, Mr. Dean described the March 21 meeting with Mr. Nixon this way:

"As far as my own involvement in having to do anything about the money, I came out having been turned around as far as the desirability or not desirability of doing that; that indeed, the President felt it was desirable, but I knew I had nothing or had the impression I had nothing to do with it and would not have any responsibility for it."

Discussing the meeting minutes later with Representative Tom Railsback, Republican of Illinois, Mr. Dean declared that "I can only say, Mr. Railsback, that the President was taking the lead at this time. I was just sort of following along. . . ."

Representative David W. Dennis, Republican of Indiana, pursued the subject with Mr. Dean. "You say that in the conversation on March 21," Mr. Dennis asked, "you were trying to persuade the President not to make payments to hunt?"

"That was my initial motive and I was shortly turned around," Mr. Dean asserted.

The querying of Mr. Dean by House members was sharply limited by a rule reducing each member to five minutes of questioning that was vigorously imposed by the committee chairman, Peter W. Rodino Jr., during the closed meeting.

Mr. Dean's most intensive questioning, therefore, came

from Mr. St. Clair, who tried but apparently failed in his attempt to find any significant contradictions between Mr. Dean's prior testimony and the information provided in the edited White House transcripts.

Mr. St. Clair dwelt at length on Mr. Dean's unsuccessful efforts last year to obtain immunity from prosecution in return for his testimony that Mr. Nixon participated in the cover-up.

Damaging Material

In addition, many of the St. Clair questions seemed to produce new and damaging information. It was his persistent questioning on the disparity between Mr. Dean's Senate testimony about the first so-called "hush money" meeting on March 13 and the evidence on the transcript of the March 21 meeting that prompted Mr. Dean to state that he recalled a prior money discussion with the President.

Similarly, Mr. Dean later managed to turn a hostile St. Clair question about his credibility into a veiled attack on the original White House transcripts:

ST. CLAIR: Now, do you recall testifying before the Senate committee that while in this meeting on the afternoon of March 21, in the President's presence, you directly accused Mr. [John D.] Ehrlichman and Mr. Haldeman of obstruction of justice in the presence of the President?"

DEAN: I recall that testimony, yes.

ST. CLAIR: Have you reviewed the transcript of the afternoon meeting with the President? . . . Do you observe, as I do, there is no such conversation?"

DEAN: I observe that it appears that the first part of the transcript is missing, or the first part of the conversation is missing . . . there are indirect references [in the unpublished portions] that Mr. Ehrlichman makes a rather snide remark that counsel here reads the statutes that . . . would indicate that it might well have occurred prior to the point that these transcripts pick up."

Mr. St. Clair moved quickly to another point without further comment.



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John M. Doar, the special counsel, listening to the speakers yesterday. At right is Albert E. Jenner Jr., an assistant to Mr. Doar.