

Magruder 'Praised' For Coverup

Washington

Jeb Stuart Magruder testified at the Watergate cover-up trial yesterday that he was informed in the summer of 1972 that then President Richard Nixon was "pleased" with Magruder's efforts to keep the truth about Watergate from coming out.

Magruder said that he received this message from John W. Dean III, the President's counsel. He said Dean accompanied it with another message: that if anything "happened" to Magruder — if he should be indicted, say — he would "of course be taken care of in the same manner" as the seven men involved in the carrying out the Watergate break-in.

Magruder left it unclear as to whether Mr. Nixon was

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supposed to have been the author of the second message as well.

Magruder was the deputy director of the Committee to Re-elect the President. Now, like Dean, he is a federal prison inmate as a result of pleading guilty to conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Watergate matter.

He was testifying yesterday for the second day, as the prosecution's third witness against the five former White House and Nixon campaign aides charged with conspiring to obstruct justice through such means as payments to those involved in Watergate to keep them silent.

In the course of the day, Magruder provided — in addition to his statement about Mr. Nixon — damaging testimony against four of the five defendants. Some of it was a repeat of testimony he gave before the Senate Watergate committee, but substantial portions were new.

Magruder said that former Attorney General John

N. Mitchell, who had been director of the Nixon campaign, asked him in the summer of 1972 to indicate to the grand jury "the limited role he (Mitchell) played" and the major role played by Magruder, particularly in the area of finances and policy.

Magruder's role at the committee, as he described it yesterday, was actually quite subordinate to that of Mitchell, who, Magruder said, made the policy decisions.

Magruder also testified that on March 27, 1973, as the coverup was in the process of unraveling, he went to Mitchell with a laundry list of the things he would need if he went to jail — honey, clemency, help in finding a job later, about a dozen items in all.

Magruder said that Mitchell approved each item, and asked him to keep his silence about the truth of Watergate. "He asked me to continue to hold, not to break, in effect," Magruder recounted, "and the conditions would be met."

In describing this list, Magruder implicated another defendant, H.R. Haldeman, once Mr. Nixon's chief of staff at the White House.

Magruder said he and Mitchell discussed the laundry list with Haldeman a day later, on March 28.

"Mr. Haldeman said that he could not make any assurance as chief of staff at the White House," Magruder told the jury of nine women and three men considering the case.

"But as a friend," Haldeman said, according to Magruder, he "could" try to help on each of the items on the list, and "would."

Magruder had testified at the Senate Watergate hearings about some offers of assistance. He said, for example, that in the summer of 1972 he had gotten "assurances about income and being taken care of" and that there would be a "good opportunity for executive clemency." He did not specify who made the offers, nor did he link them to an understanding that in return he was to remain silent.

He did say at the hearings that Mitchell had told him on March 27 that he, Mitchell, would take care of everything. Magruder did not, however, describe the sequence he described yesterday.

Magruder, 39, a healthy-looking despite his incarceration on a ten-month to four-year sentence, gave no testimony directly implicating the third of the well-known defendants in the case, John D. Ehrlichman, once Mr. Nixon's assistant for domestic affairs.

But he gave a great deal of damaging testimony about the two lesser known defendants in the case, Robert C. Mardian, a former assistant attorney general who was a political coordinator for the Committee to Re-Elect the President, and Kenneth Wells Parkinson, a Washington lawyer who was hired by the committee after the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in to handle some of the legal problems confronting the committee.

Magruder, testifying in a firm, confident voice, linked Mardian to the earliest stages of the coverup.

He said that Mardian, with Mitchell, had discussed with him the perjury that he (Magruder) and another campaign official, Herbert L. Porter, were to commit.

As for Parkinson, Magruder seemed to be providing substantial new evidence. He said, for instance, that Parkinson had had him and Porter prepare false statements with the intention of giving them to the FBI.

Magruder, responding to questions by Jill Wine Vollner, a prosecutor, testified that he gave Parkinson a full account of the facts about Watergate after being told by Mardian that Mitchell wanted him to do so.

Later, he said, Mitchell asked him about this and Magruder quoted Mitchell as having said, "Just don't tell the truth any more to anyone who is not on the team working on the problem."

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AP Wirephoto

JEB STUART MAGRUDER LEAVING COURT
He testified that he was promised financial help