

Parkinson Denies Knowingly Playing Watergate-

By LESLEY OELSNER

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 — Kenneth Wells Parkinson insisted today at the Watergate cover-up trial that he had not knowingly played any role in the payments of cash to the Watergate burglars.

He conceded, however, that he had given inaccurate testimony before a grand jury about one aspect of the case. That aspect involved statements about Watergate, some of them made in his presence by an official of the Nixon re-election campaign, Jeb Stuart Magruder.

He was also confronted by the prosecution on cross-examination with another statement that he had made to the grand jury that appeared to be the direct opposite of the testimony he was giving at the trial.

He brushed the matter aside, implying that he saw no contradictions.

And, although he held to his contention that he did not have any "suspicions" about the payments until late 1972, he was forced, under questioning by the prosecution, to describe a number of incidents that occurred earlier in the year and that tended to make his contention difficult to understand.

He testified, for example, that he had been told by William O. Bittman, attorney for one of the burglars, E. Howard Hunt Jr., that "commitments" had been made to the burglars.

Passed on Statements

He also testified that he had passed on to various campaign officials a variety of statements on the General subject made to him by Mr. Bittman. He said, too, that he was aware of at least one demand on the campaign committee for money.

Mr. Parkinson, a 47-year-old lawyer who was hired by the Nixon re-election committee on June 22, 1972, to handle the legal problems resulting from the break-in at the Democratic national headquarters at the Watergate complex five days earlier, made these statements under questioning by Jill Wine Volner, an assistant special prosecutor.

Under questioning earlier by his own attorney, Jacob A. Stein, the defendant said that he had told John W. Dean 3d, then White House counsel to President Nixon, about a Bittman remark about "commitments" had been made, they would be honored.

Mr. Parkinson is to resume testifying tomorrow.

Today, he contradicted certain testimony given by two co-defendants — former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, who was the director of the 1972 Nixon re-election campaign until July, 1972, and thereafter was a consultant, and former Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian, who worked at the campaign committee and retained Mr. Parkinson.

Mr. Parkinson repeated his testimony of yesterday, that Mr. Mitchell had told him not

to believe an account that Mr. Maguder gave Mr. Parkinson of the committee's involvement in the Watergate break-in. Mr. Mitchell, testifying in his own defense earlier at the trial, said that he had had no such conversation with Mr. Parkinson.

Mardian Contradicted

Mr. Parkinson also testified that when Mr. Mardian introduced him to G. Gordon Liddy, the man devised the plan for

the Watergate break-in, Mr. Mardian had not given Mr. Liddy any instructions about telling Mr. Parkinson the truth. Mr. Mardian testified earlier this week that he had told Mr. Liddy to tell Mr. Parkinson the truth.

Mr. Mardian testified earlier that he had not told Mr. Parkinson that Mr. Liddy had given him a long account of the break-in, including the statement that the committee had funded it. Mr. Mardian said that he had withheld this from Mr. Parkinson because Mr. Liddy had given the statement under the assurance that it would be protected by the attorney-client relationship.

However, Mr. Mardian was in effect co-counsel with Mr. Parkinson for the Nixon committee in the litigation resulting from the break-in until Mr. Mardian began concentrating on purely political work for the committee.

This afternoon, Mrs. Volner remarked on the fact that the two were co-counsel.

"Isn't it a fact," she asked, "that there is no legal or ethical restriction on one attorney telling co-counsel" information obtained under the attorney-client relationship?"

Yes, Mr. Parkinson replied.

The account that Mr. Parkinson gave the jury today—first on direct examination by Mr. Stein, then under cross-examination by Mrs. Volner—was essentially a picture of a lawyer concentrating on the legal details of a lawsuit and ignoring almost everything else around him.

He was asked repeatedly about statements that various people had made to him. And repeatedly he replied, "I had no interest."

Concerned About Burglars

He told Mr. Stein, for instance, of a conversation he had in the summer of 1972 with Mr. Bittman, Mr. Hunt's attorney. Mr. Bittman is an undicted co-conspirator in this case.

He is also the person who recently turned over to the prosecution a memorandum that Mr. Hunt wrote in November, 1972, outlining the "commitments" of money and clemency made to the Watergate burglars and whom the prosecution has accused of lying about that memorandum.

As Mr. Parkinson recounted

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Payment Role

the conversation today, Mr. Bittman told him that he was concerned about the plight of the Watergate burglars, then in jail and in need of bail money.

"I had no interest in [Mr. Bittman's client] Mr. Parkinson said. "My client was the Committee to Re-elect the President."

Later, Mr. Parkinson told of getting a document from Mr. Bittman that he said Mr. Bittman had contended was "very important" to the committee.



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Kenneth W. Parkinson, right, being questioned by his counsel, Jacob A. Stein, at cover-up trial yesterday.

Mr. Parkinson said that he had made a Xerox copy of it and passed the copy on to Mr. Dean without reading it.

This occurred, he said, in late November or December, 1972.

"Why didn't you want to read it?" Mr. Stein asked.

"I didn't want to read it," Mr. Parkinson replied. "I wasn't interested in it."

Subsequently, however, he added that he was "concerned" about the contents of the document, because, he said, "Mr. Bittman had talked over a period of time of some commitments."

In his testimony on direct examination, Mr. Parkinson made a number of statements that could help his case.

He said, for instance, that he had instructed Mr. Magruder to tell the truth to agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that the only reason he did not tell Federal prosecutors everything he knew about Watergate was that some information he had was protected by the attorney-client privilege, and that he had rebuffed a request by Mr. Dean to deny falsely — if asked — that Mr. Dean had shown him confidential F.B.I. reports.

In view of the apparent conflict that Mrs. Volner elicited later, it was unclear what effect the earlier statements might have.

Questions on Commitments

Perhaps the clearest conflict was the one that Mr. Parkinson appeared to brush aside. It involved the question of what Mr. Bittman had told him about the commitments to the burglars.

Mrs. Volner asked Mr. Parkinson whether Mr. Bittman had told him that the commitments involved both clemency and money.

Mr. Parkinson said that Mr. Bittman had not.

Mrs. Volner then read to Mr. Parkinson from his testimony before the grand jury. In that testimony, Mr. Parkinson said that "he [Mr. Bittman] said the commitments generally related to money" for living expenses and attorney fees, "and he also talked of clemency."

Mr. Parkinson did not appear even slightly unsettled by what Mrs. Volner had read.

"What I told the grand jury is true," he said. He went on to say that Mr. Bittman "did not know what the commitments were." He said that although Mr. Bittman did not know what the commitments were, "over a period of time I assumed" what they were.