

SFChronicle
DEC 28 1974
Watergate
Trial
Winds Up

Washington

The government's chief prosecutor asked Watergate jurors yesterday to "close the ledger" on the scandal, bearing in mind that the nation's "only salvation" is to keep high officials "fair, honorable and lawful."

Speaking softly to a hushed courtroom, prosecutor James F. Neal said Americans will tolerate mistakes by their officials, but will not tolerate criminal conduct to "cover up those mistakes."

"They may make mistakes" he said, "but they may not cover up those mistakes by misuse of govern-

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

ment agencies, veiled offers of clemency, subornation of perjury, perjury, destruction of evidence and payments of money to keep those with knowledge quiet.

In the last words spoken by any attorney before the case reaches the jury Monday, Neal seemed to be referring to more than the five defendants on trial when he added:

"They may not, in an effort to perpetuate themselves in power, assault the temples of justice in a massive effort to obstruct justice. When these things occur, society must call those responsible to account.

"You are the ones who must balance the accounts and close the ledger plates of Watergate."

In an 80-minute rebuttal, Neal sought to answer more than 13 hours of final argu-

ments in four days by defense attorneys.

Although Neal had given a four-hour closing argument last week, he was also allowed a rebuttal, according to court rules.

"This case is not a political case," Neal said of the scandal that resulted in Richard Nixon's resignation from the presidency. "It's not a case of one party against the other. We condemn lawlessness whether by one side or the other."

Referring chiefly to the major defendants — former presidential aides H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell — Neal called their defenses "amazing."

"They take the position that this whole massive coverup was concocted, planned and carried out by the little privates of this army —

Dean, LaRue, Magruder, Kalmbach and Ulasewicz — and that they (the defendants) were not participating," Neal said.

"If you believe that, find the defendants not guilty."

The names Neal mentioned — all government witnesses — are former White House counsel John W. Dean III, Nixon campaign officials Frederick C. LaRue and Jeb Stuart Magruder, presidential lawyer Herbert W. Kalmbach and Anthony T. Ulasewicz, a White House courier.

Speaking of such men, Neal said:

"How relieved they must be that they have confessed their sins and retained their dignity."

Dean, Magruder and Kalmbach are serving prison terms based on their guilty pleas. Kalmbach's plea related to campaign

law violations rather than the coverup.

LaRue is awaiting sentencing.

Ulasewicz has never been charged, but has been named an unindicted co-conspirator in the coverup.

Neal said Mr. Nixon's tape recordings showed that an attack on Dean's credibility "was planned many months ago in the White House of the United States," Neal said most defense attorneys adopted the same tactic in their arguments to the jury.

Each defendant insisted he had played no role in raising funds for the original Watergate burglars or in obstructing justice in any way, Neal noted.

But Neal listed, in rapid-fire fashion, events that have not been denied.

"No one has denied that clemency was offered. No one has denied that \$429,500 was paid in the strangest sort of ways.

"No one has denied that there were massive and repeated efforts to destroy documentary evidence. No one has denied that the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency was sent to the FBI to try to get them to taper off their investigation."

Referring to the defendants, Neal said:

"What they have done is say, 'It was someone else, not I.'"

In a separate and shorter

rebuttal, associate prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste discussed evidence against Haldeman. He compared his involvement in the money scheme to a child found covered with jam in his kitchen.

Ben-Veniste said Haldeman could not explain why so much cash was paid to the Watergate burglary defendants, if not to keep them silent about the involvement of higher officials.

"Here is the jam, ladies and gentlemen," Ben-Veniste said. "It's on Mr. Haldeman's face and hands, and he can't get it off."

On Monday, U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica will review for jurors the multi-count indictment in the conspiracy case and will explain what laws apply, then the jury will begin deliberating.

Conspiracy, perjury and obstruction of justice charges contained in the indictment — for all the defendants combined — are punishable by a maximum 82 years imprisonment and \$96,000 in fines. The indictment covers 50 pages.

Los Angeles Times