

Jury's Watergate Verdict --  
Top Nixon Aides are Guilty

## Mitchell, Ehrlichman, Haldeman Convicted In Coverup Conspiracy

Washington

The three most powerful men in former President Nixon's administration, John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, were convicted yesterday of trying to cover up the Watergate scandal.

In a New Year's Day verdict, a U.S. District Court jury of nine women and three men also convicted Robert C. Mardian, one-time assistant to Mitchell in the Justice Department, of trying to help in the coverup.

But the jury, which deliberated for 15 hours over three days, acquitted Kenneth W. Parkinson, an attorney for Mr. Nixon's re-election campaign committee, of conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

The verdict, ending three months of jury selection and trial, marked a climax in the Watergate scandal, which drove Mr. Nixon from office last August 9 and has preoccupied American political life since the 1972 election.

As result of the verdict:

• Mitchell, 61, Mr. Nixon's attorney general and re-election campaign manager, stands convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justice, two counts of lying to a grand jury and one count of perjury. He faces a possible prison term of up to 25 years and a maximum fine of \$37,500.

• Haldeman, 48, Mr. Nixon's former chief of staff, stands convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justice and three counts of perjury. He could be sentenced to 25 years in prison and fined \$21,000.

• Ehrlichman, 49, Mr. Nixon's former domestic counselor, stands convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justice and two counts of lying to a grand jury. He faces a

possible 20 years in prison and up to \$35,000 in fines.

• Mardian, 51, Mr. Nixon's former assistant attorney general, stands convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice. He could get five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The acquittal of Parkinson marked the only charges in which the jury did not return a guilty plea.

Judge John J. Sirica deferred sentencing pending a probation report.

Even after hearing the jury's decision, all of the

convicted men protested their innocence.

"I think I'm going to the moon — that's the best place," declared Mitchell. He said he thinks he has about 50 issues for appeal. His attorney, William Hundley, said the former attorney general turned to him

Back Page Col. 4

From Page 1

and whispered: "Don't take it too hard."

Haldeman, facing gusty wind and television lights outside the courthouse, declared: "I know that legally and morally, I'm totally and absolutely innocent. I have the full conviction that ultimately the truth will be known." His attorneys have said they will appeal.

Ehrlichman, who stopped with his wife, Jeanne, to talk to reporters in the courthouse press room, said, "As far as the verdict itself

is concerned, it changes nothing as far as my basic . . . and deep-seated feeling of innocence. I have

been satisfied of my own innocence from the beginning."

Ehrlichman shied away from placing any blame on Mr. Nixon. "I have no sense of resentment or hard feelings toward anyone involved in this matter," he said. His attorneys, too, have said they would appeal.

"I do not think the result is a just one," said Mardian's attorney, David Bress. "I do not think Robert Mardian should have been indicted in the first place. I thought it was inconceivable all along that any jury would ever convict Bob Mardian."

In Vail, Colo., presidential press secretary Ron Nessen said vacationing President Gerald R. Ford, who succeeded to the presidency when Mr. Nixon resigned, would have no comment on the Watergate convictions.

At San Clemente, where Mr. Nixon is recuperating from phlebitis which prevented him from testifying at the trial, a switchboard operator said the former president will make a statement today about the conviction.

Asked if he was satisfied with the verdict, chief Watergate prosecutor James F. Neal of Nashville, Tenn., said, "I don't think satisfied is the word — it's one of relief that a long hard job is over, and I can go home."

Two other former White House aides were among those charged with conspiracy when the Watergate grand jury returned its coverup indictments last March 1.

One of them, Charles W. Colson, pleaded guilty of attempting to smear Daniel Ellsberg before Ellsberg's 1973 trial in the Pentagon Papers case, and in return the coverup charges and charges in a related case were dropped.

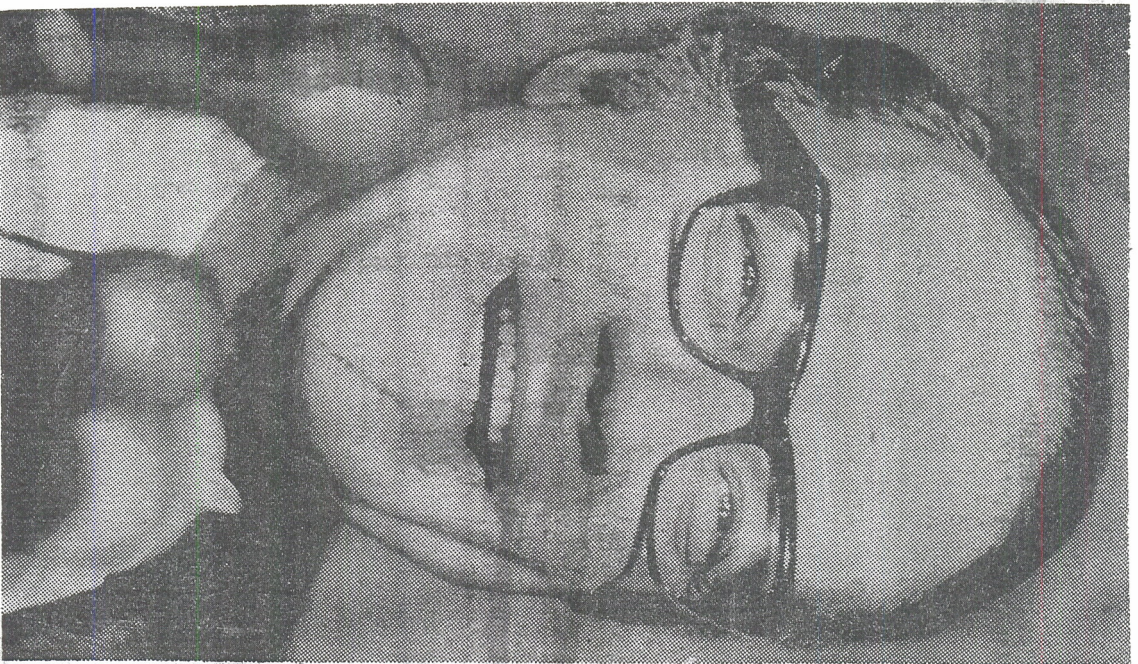
The other, Haldeman's former assistant Gordon Strachan, was granted a separate trial just before jury selection began October 1.

The five remaining defendants stood when Sirica's clerk, James Capitanio, read the verdict.

The jury, eight of its members black and four white, notified the judge in a note at 4:25 p.m. EST that it had reached the verdict, and 23 minutes later the jurors filed into the courtroom.

Associated Press





**Kenneth Parkinson (left) was acquitted in the coverup scandal, but H. R. Haldeman (center) and John Ehrlichman were convicted**

*UPI Telephotos*



**JOHN MITCHELL**  
**Obstruction, perjury**

*AP Wirephoto*



**ROBERT MARDIAN**  
**Also guilty**

*UPI Telephoto*