

PROSECUTION HAS MORE CASES AHEAD

Schedule Includes Matter of Alteration of Tapes and Trial of Connally

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 2—The Watergate special prosecutor's office, with its most spectacular case just concluded successfully, still has significant investigations pending, including one on whether attempts were made by the White House to impede the Nixon impeachment inquiry by misrepresenting conversations in the Oval Office.

What began as an investigation into an 18½-minute tape gap and the possibility that this erasure constituted destruction of evidence has now broadened, sources in the Watergate office said, into an examination of the possibility that the bowdlerization and alteration of the tape transcripts supplied to the House Judiciary Committee by the White House violated Federal law by obstructing Congress.

At least one major trial is already on the calendar. On March 26, former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally will go on trial for perjury and bribery in connection with illegal 1972 campaign contributions from milk producers.

No date has been set for what is believed likely to be the brief trial of Jack Chestnut, a 1970 campaign aide to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, the Minnesota Democrat, on charges of accepting an illegal campaign contribution, also from milk producers.

Strachan Case Uncertain

Still uncertain is the outcome of the case against Gordon C. Strachan, a former White House aide who was initially scheduled to stand trial with five other defendants in connection with the watergate cover-up. The question of whether Mr. Strachan will come to trial—his case was severed from the others—awaits an airing of the legal issues, sources said.

Other major investigations still under way include what sources in the special prosecutor's office called—a "full-scale investigation into Charles G. Rebozo, former President Richard M. Nixon's close friend, in connection with campaign contributions. Maurice H. Stans, Mr. Nixon's chief campaign fund raiser, is also still under

investigation, as is the Committee for the re-election of the President. A resolution of the Stans and re-election committee inquiry is expected early this year, sources said.

Another campaign contribution matter still of interest to the millionaire's illegal contribution to the 1972 Nixon campaign.

Hope for End by June

It appears, however, that Henry S. Ruth, the special prosecutor, expects his office to have completed all its business by next June. Mr. Ruth said today that it would not be appropriate to ask Congress to extend the terms of the two Federal grand juries looking into Watergate matters. One goes out of existence next month, the second in June.

One area that it seems the special prosecutor is unlikely to become involved with is the Central Intelligence Agency, which, Government sources have alleged, engaged in domestic surveillance in violation of its charter. Mr. Ruth indicated that the matter went beyond the scope of his office, and another source said he "could not expect it to land over here," since there are, thus far, no indications of criminal violations.

Among the matters being pursued is the backdating of a deed concerne with the donation of Mr. Nixon's Vice-Presidential papers—and his subsequent White House aide, Edward L. Morgan, has already pleaded guilty, and the special prosecutor is known to be looking into the roles played by Frank DeMarco Jr., the tax lawyer involved in the undertaking, "and possibly others."

Abuse of Agencies

Another unresolved investigation concerns the abuse of the powers of the Federal bureaucracy by the Nixon White House, through the alleged illegal use of wiretaps and the Internal Revenue Service. A number of matters concerning the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation are also still under study, including its acquisition of an insurance company.

In Nashville, meanwhile, the chief Watergate prosecutor, James F. Neal—who resigned as of today to return to his law practice one day after obtaining four convictions in the cover-up trial—was quoted as saying that he believed Mr. Nixon had been involved in the cover-up but that President Ford had been "correct" in pardoning him.

Mr. Neal, in an interview in The Nashville Banner, said: "There was no doubt in my mind, absolutely none, of the involvement of President Nixon. I don't think anyone could listen to the tapes and reach any other conclusion." He added, "I personally thought the President was correct, all things considered, in pardoning the former President."