

U.S. Divided
On Pardons
In Cover-Up

Princeton, N.J. -- Public opinion in closely divided on whether pardons should be granted John N. Mitchell, H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, and Robert C. Mardian, each of whom was found guilty in the recent Watergate cover-up trial.

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In the latest nationwide survey, 43 per cent thought these men should be pardoned, while 44 per cent opposed such action. Another 13 per cent qualified their views or did not express an opinion.

A substantial majority of persons interviewed (73 per cent) thought the defendants received a fair trial. In addition, almost the same percentage (70 per cent) agreed with the guilty verdicts.

Since it appears unlikely at this time that the defendants will receive pardons, all survey respondents were asked what sentence they think should be imposed upon those men.

About a third of all persons interviewed favored a jail sentence (34 per cent), while 30 per cent said they should only be fined. Fifteen per cent would impose both a jail sentence and a fine. Another 4 per cent said the four should receive neither a jail sentence or a fine. About one in six (17 per cent) did not express an opinion or qualified the response.

Charges against five defendants in the Watergate cover-up trial stemmed from the investigation of the break-in at Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate complex in June, 1972. After deliberating for three days, the jury found:

- Former Attorney General Mitchell and former White House chief of staff Haldeman each guilty of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and three counts of perjury.

- Former White House domestic affairs adviser Ehrlichman guilty of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and two counts of perjury.

- Former Assistant Attorney General Mardian guilty of conspiracy.

- The fifth defendant, Kenneth Wells Parkinson, not guilty. Parkinson was hired by the committee for the re-elec-

tion of the President after the break-in.

The defendants remain free on personal bond until they are sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica. The laws they violated carry total maximum penalties that, theoretically, could mean imprisonment for as long as 25 years, in the cases of Haldeman and Mitchell.

Here are the questions asked: *Some people say that because Former President Richard Nixon was pardoned, other Watergate figures should also be pardoned. How do you feel about this—Do you think the others should receive pardons, or not?*

Yes, should	43%
No, should not	44
No opinion/Qualified	13

Do you think these men received a fair trial, or not?

Yes	73%
No	15
No opinion	12

As you may know, four of the five defendants in the Watergate cover-up trial, including Mitchell, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman, were found guilty. Just from what you have heard or read, do you agree or disagree with these guilty verdicts?

Agree	70%
Disagree	14
No opinion/Qualified	16

What sentence do you think should be imposed upon those who were convicted—would you sentence them to jail, or would you fine them?

Jail	34%
Fine	30
Both	15
Neither	4
Other	5
No opinion	12

These findings are based upon telephone interviews from Jan. 10-15 with 1,038 adults in more than 100 scientifically selected localities across the nation.

From staff reports and news dispatches