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Ruckelshaus Cites Reagan 'Offer'

Washington

Former Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, one of the victims of President Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" of 1974, said last night he received what he considered a "hard offer" to be Ronald Reagan's running mate three weeks ago.

Ruckelshaus said he told John Sears, Reagan's chief strategist, and L. Keith Bulen, former Republican National Committeeman from Indiana, who he said extended the offer, he would have to talk to Reagan first. They told him, he said, they would set up a meeting and get back to him.

The next thing he heard, Ruckelshaus said, was word from Bulen in a phone call Sunday night that because Reagan had fallen behind in the delegate count it had been decided they had to ask Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania to run, "to boost his chances" in the Northeast. Reagan announced his choice Monday morning.

At Reagan headquarters, James Lake, his press secretary, denied that any hard offer had ever been made to Ruckelshaus. "They (Sears and Bulen) talked to him to find out whether he'd have any interest, going back as far as four months ago," Lake said. "But there never was a hard offer made until the one to Schweiker."

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