

Haldeman's Critics Open Fire

Washington

H.R. Haldeman's book on Watergate and the Richard Nixon presidency sparked new controversy yesterday as "The Ends of Power" officially went on sale, drawing a steady stream of buyers around the country.

The 352-page, \$12.95 book was originally to be released February 27, but was rushed out early after excerpts of the manuscript were leaked. The leak to The Washington Post touched off a furor in book publishing circles and among newspapers and magazines that had paid thousands of dollars for the rights to print parts of the story next week.

Most of the key figures — Nixon himself, Haldeman and chief White House domestic adviser John Ehrlichman — were silent or had little to say about the book.

Haldeman issued a statement saying he was not in a position "to respond to the many questions and comments arising from the news reports of portions of my book. . . . I will simply say that I believe the book in its totality speaks for itself."

Bob Woodward, whose reporting of the Watergate case with Carl Bernstein won a Pulitzer Prize for the Washington Post, said there was no new evidence revealed in the book and that it was mainly theories.

"These are the people who said the truth is negotiable, and I think we have another version of the negotiated truth. I'm not sure that Haldeman has told us everything. I think he's holding back something," Woodward said on NBC-TV's "Today" show.

Woodward also said he believed Nixon's Watergate troubles involved more than just sending out Nixon aide Charles W. Colson to get something on Lawrence O'Brien, then Democratic national chairman.

"It should be remembered from the testimony that this break-in team did not work for Mr. Colson," he said. "They were working for the President's re-election committee."

"I think all of the evidence shows that Nixon lit lots of matches, and handed one to Colson perhaps, one to Haldeman, one to Dean, one to Erlichman," he said.

Woodward declined to comment on "Deep Throat," who Haldeman contends was Fred Fielding, an aide to Nixon counsel John Dean. Fielding denies it, and Dean has noted Fielding was out of the country during some of the period.

Dean, interviewed on television station KNXT in Los Angeles, said that the excerpts he had seen were "full of speculation, theory, very little hard new information."

He added, however: "Maybe much of this speculation is actually hard information that he has to put in a speculative vein because otherwise the courts could turn around and say, 'Well, Mr. Haldeman, you didn't know about this before — does that mean our amnesia seems to have gone? You've got answers to questions we've asked you for years.'"

Sam Ervin, the retired chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, said "before I would accept his book as credible, I would want it corroborated by all the apostles except Judas."

"A man that would commit perjury under oath might possibly be tempted to commit it when he is not under oath," Ervin said in a telephone interview.

Henry Ruth, former special Watergate prosecutor wanted to talk more about the ethics of the scandal's participants profiting from such books.

"I have long been bothered by the commercial aspects of all these Watergate books," he said.

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