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SIDE: 1 Samuel Dash

SIDE: 2

1. Sen. Howard H. Baker, Jr. 2. Sen. Sam Ervin

- 3. Samuel Dash
- 4. Sen. Joseph M. Montoya

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WATERGATE THE TESTIMONY OF JEB STUART MAGRUDER A Question of Ethics

COMPILED BY DON MOLNER

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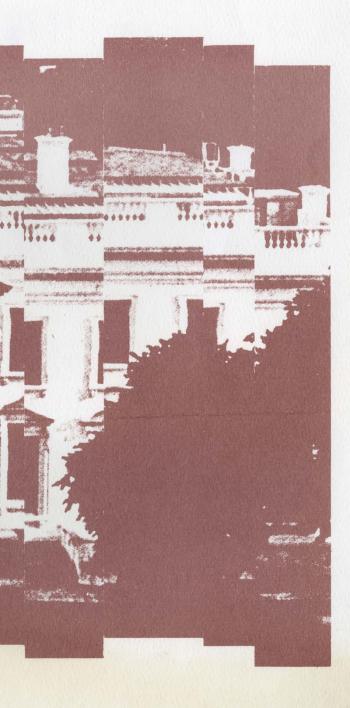
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WATERCATE

THE TESTIMONY OF JEB STUART MAGRUDER A Question of Ethics

Even the wildest nightmares of the Watergate defendants could not have envisioned the scene: Jeb Stuart Magruder, former White House aide and deputy director of President Nixon's reelection campaign, testifying that he, the Attorney General of the United States and the counsel to the President were participants in a scheme which included burglary and wiretapping. Yet, appearing before the select Senate committee on June 14, 1973, Magruder outlined the details of the break-in at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate and of the subsequent coverup.

James McCord, one of the convicted Watergate felons, had testified that his decision to tell all to Judge Sirica had been prompted in part when he saw a photo of smiling Jeb Magruder. McCord, caught by police while in the process of burglarizing the Democratic national headquarters, faced a long jail sentence while other high ranking conspirators, like Magruder, remained free from prosecution.

Now television cameras focused on Jeb Magruder as he told his bizarre story to the Senate committee. He claimed that former FBI agent G. Gordon Liddy had originated a master spy plan which included kidnapping, the use of call girls, and blackmail. The complex plan was explained at a meeting attended by Magruder, John Dean, and Attorney General Mitchell. Did the Attorney General, the President's counsel, and the then top official of the President's reelection committee reprimand Liddy when he suggested illegal acts? Did they call the police? Did they, at least, fire Liddy? On the contrary; Magruder said they told Liddy to "go back to the drawing boards and come up with a more realistic plan."

Liddy revised his plan several times, using surreptitious entry, photography and wiretapping instead of kidnapping and call girls. Mitchell finally agreed to Liddy's plan, Magruder said, even though they all knew it was illegal.

Magruder then confessed that he had committed perjury in an effort to hide Whitehouse involvement. With the aid of Mitchell and Dean he told a false story to the FBI, later to the grand jury investigating the Watergate raid, and finally at the trial of the seven original Watergate conspirators.

A BRIGHT YOUNG MAN

Old acquaintances recalled the outstanding characteristics of Jeb Magruder: intelligent, polite, good looking, athletic, popular with girls. Many of his school friends pegged him as a social climber; a charmer who seemed destined for a very successful future.

From humble beginnings as the son of a stationer, Magruder majored in political science at Williams College, spent two years in Korea with the U.S. Army, then launched a career in marketing and advertising. After starting with the Jewel Tea Company he became president of two small companies in California.

Dean, and Attorney General Mitche

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His political aspirations were furthered when, after working for the election of Barry Goldwater in 1964, he served as coordinator of the 1968 Nixon campaign in southern California. With the Nixon victory came a position as special assistant to the President.

By 1971 he was included in the inner circle of Nixon advisors. At the age of 37, Magruder became deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, second only to John Mitchell. In that role he was responsible for advertising, research, and security.

AN ETHICALLY JUSTIFIED ANSWER

The senators probed Magruder, attempting to find reasons for his assorted transgressions. He explained that his moral judgement had been eroded by acts of the Left: antiwar demonstrations, draft card burnings, theft of the Pentagon papers. He was especially confused by the anti-Vietnam war activities of his old ethics professor at Williams College, William Sloan Coffin, Jr.

Thus, according to Magruder, there was just cause to treat their political opponents as foreign enemies. They had to get Richard Nixon reelected. If that meant breaking the law, well, many others (including William Sloan Coffin, Jr.) had broken the law to advance their causes.

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FAULTY MEMORIES

Magruder decried the testimony of Maurice Stans, the suave former Secretary of Commerce who served as the 1972 campaign committee's finance chairman. Stans said he was totally ignorant of the fact that campaign funds were used to finance the Watergate caper. Magruder testified that soon after the Watergate arrests he informed Stans that the money he had raised paid for the burglary at Watergate.

In addition, Magruder charged that he told H. R. Haldeman about the coverup story. When Haldeman, Stans, and other Watergate principals began to display a loss of memory, Magruder, fearing he was slated to be a scapegoat, decided to testify.

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