

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FD 5553 VOLUME THREE

WATERGATE

"I HOPE THE PRESIDENT IS FORGIVEN"

John W. Dean III Testifies

COMPILED BY DON MOLNER



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Former White House Counsel John W. Dean III Testifies

"Some of these people I will be referring to are friends, some are men I greatly admire and respect, and particularly with reference to the President of the United States, I would like to say this: It is my honest belief that while the President was involved, he did not realize or appreciate at any time the implications of his involvement, and I think that when the facts come out I hope the President is forgiven."

John W. Dean III
June 25, 1973

The line in the Rotunda of the Senate Office Building began to form at 1 a.m., hours before any spectators would be allowed to enter the hearing room. It was the morning of June 25, 1973, and the crowd was anxiously awaiting the testimony of John W. Dean III.

Dean's appearance before the Senate Watergate investigating committee had been postponed for one week. Chairman Sam Ervin said the action was taken to prevent Dean's testifying about possible links between President Nixon and the Watergate coverup during the state visit of U.S.S.R. leader Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Now the Soviet leader and President Nixon had ended their historic summit talks; it was time to listen to John Dean.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

A handtruck bearing large stacks of paper was wheeled up the marble staircase and parked outside the Caucus Room. The papers were bound copies of Dean's opening statement which, when delivered in two parts, totaled 245 pages.

The crowd of spectators quickly filled every seat. They stood against the rear wall, sat on windowsills and leaned against the marble pillars. It was primarily a young crowd, dressed in polo shirts and jeans, and they waited quietly for the former Presidential counsel.

Suddenly John Dean walked in, flanked by two United States Marshals, two lawyers, and his attractive wife Maureen Kane Dean. The group took seats near the front of the room, Maureen sitting directly behind her husband.

The 34 year-old star witness wore horn-rimmed eyeglasses; his hair was neatly cut and combed. Dean maintained a calm and dispassionate manner which never faded during the many days spent before the Senate committee.

HIS TESTIMONY

Dean began his long-awaited testimony by reading the 245-page statement. For more than six hours he droned on, pausing occasionally to sip water or tea offered by Maureen. At one point his wife passed a note to Dean which read " I know you're conserving your voice, but be as forceful as possible."

His lengthy statement was devastating in its charges against the Nixon Administration and the President.

In summary, Dean testified that:

- (1) the White House had "an insatiable appetite for political intellegence, all coupled with a do-it-yourself White House staff, regardless of the law."
- (2) President Nixon was involved in the Watergate coverup and ignored or failed to understand Dean's warning about "a cancer growing on the presidency."
- (3) President Nixon said that he had personally discussed a clemency offer for one of the Watergate defendants and that Nixon told him it would be no problem to raise up to \$1 million in hush money.
- (4) former presidential aides H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman directed extensive coverup activities including the destruction of evidence. Former Attorney General John Mitchell, former Assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian, deputy campaign director Jeb Stuart Magruder and former White House aide Charles W. Colson played active roles in the coverup.

CHALLENGER GUERNEY

Despite severe cross-examination by the Senate panel, Dean insisted he was telling the truth and stuck firmly to his allegations that Nixon and his former top aides were deeply involved in covering up the scope of the Watergate scandal from the prosecutors and the press.

Dean told of a February meeting with Presidential aides Haldeman and Ehrlichman for the purpose of developing

a strategy for dealing with members of the Senate committee. According to Dean, Ehrlichman said the White House could not look for help from Democratic Senators Ervin, Montoya, Talmidge, and Inouye. Indeed, even Republican Senator Lowell Weicker was an independent who would "give the White House problems."

But there was no doubt about the loyalty of Edward J. Gurney of Florida. "Senator Gurney would help the White House and would not have to be told to do so," Dean quoted Ehrlichman as saying.

As if in answer to Ehrlichman's prophecy, Senator Gurney took every opportunity to challenge the testimony of John W. Dean III. The accompanying record demonstrates Gurney's vigorous cross-examination as well as Dean's imperturbability, his mood of solemn deliberation.

Don Molner