

Watergate investigation about my knowledge of the Plumbers' activities.

As I prepared my defense, again, national security was my justification. But as I worked through the issues, I felt uncomfortable with the soundness of this defense. The more I tried to align my thought with a higher sense of right, the more problematic it became.

Looking around me, I recognized that my family and I were benefiting from rights that emanated from the founding ideals of America. Despite being under indictment in both federal and state courts and publicly identified with serious crimes, I enjoyed the freedom to travel wherever I wanted, to speak with whomever I wished, to pray freely in any church, and to talk to the press. Benefiting from all these rights, I had nonetheless violated another man's civil rights in order to protect the country. This seemed hypocritical regardless of my belief that it had been in the best interests of national defense.

I came to accept that I could no longer defend my conduct. If I defended myself further, if I continued to justify violating rights I continued to enjoy, I would be not only a hypocrite but a traitor to the fundamental American idea of the right of an individual to be free from unwarranted government intrusion in his life. It was then and there, in Colonial Williamsburg, surrounded by family and a sense of the history of America, that I decided to plead guilty.

Three days later my attorney, Steve Shulman, and I walked into the reception room of the office of Leon Jaworski, the special prosecutor for Watergate and related crimes. While I was convinced of the rightness of my decision in Williamsburg, I felt nervous and a little fearful as to how the meeting would go.

Jaworski had been appointed the special prosecutor six weeks before our meeting, after President Nixon had accepted the resignations of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy At-

torney General William French Smith. Archibald Cox, the previous special prosecutor, became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre" for his reputation for toughness and fairness, partly because of his role in the U.S. prosecution staff at the war crimes trials in Germany. During my meeting with him that occurred on several occasions several years later, I also learned that he was a patriotic man who deeply loved his country and had not abused its trust.

After waiting a few minutes—instead of the few minutes prosecutors often make suspects wait—Jaworski led me into his stark temporary office. We were joined by a man, Bill Rill, the lawyer directly assigned to prosecute the Plumbers.

Steve explained to the prosecutors that we had analyzed my case from every possible perspective and that we had reached a decision to initiate step one, to appoint a prosecutor that would settle the various charges without a criminal trial. After a few quiet moments, Steve asked, "Is this your view, Mr. Krogh?"

"Yes, sir, it is."

"Would you please tell me how you came to that decision?"

I told Jaworski that ever since the president had created the Special Investigations Unit in 1971 and John Edgar Hoover had assigned me to it, I had justified what we did as being in the national security. The president himself had described our unit as being crucial to national security. I thought that getting all the information we could on the case of Ellsberg and his reasons for releasing the Perlmutter was serving a national security purpose. And since that had been done in the past for national security, I had entered into Dr. Fielding's office to get information.