

New York Times Archives, February 7, 1974

Dean Disbarred in Virginia for 'Unethical' Acts

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Feb. 6 (AP) — A three-judge state court today disbarred John W. Dean 3d, former counsel to President Nixon, for what it called unethical, unprofessional and unwarranted conduct in the Watergate affair. The 35-year-old Mr. Dean, who has pleaded guilty to a Federal felony charge of obstructing justice and defrauding the United States, did not address the court in his own defense.

The disbarment action was brought by the Virginia State Bar, which charged that Mr. Dean had been guilty of unprofessional conduct by with-holding evidence, inducing a witness to commit perjury, authorizing payment of hush money to the Watergate burglars and diverting money to his own use. The three Circuit Court judges found Mr. Dean guilty of "unethical, unprofessional and unwarranted conduct as an attorney-at-law violating the code of professional ethics." They ordered that Mr. Dean's license to practice law in Virginia be revoked.

Thomas Mains, Mr. Dean's lawyer, noted before the court in a brief statement that it could reprimand, suspend or disbar Mr. Dean. "We cannot seriously contend that only a reprimand is in order," Mr. Mains said. But he added, "The full information in the final chapter is not yet written in Watergate. Our feeling is that information is largely mitigating in nature as far as Mr. Dean is concerned. We ask that the court consider suspending Dean's license until further order of the court."

The judges reached the harshest decision after deliberating for 80 minutes. The panel was composed of State Circuit Judges Franklin P. Backus of Alexandria, W. Moscoe Huntley of Richmond and W. Carrington Thompson of Chatham.