

# Watergate Raider Sought Proof of Cuba Aid to Party

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WASHINGTON, May 24—One of the Watergate conspirators testified today that he had broken into the offices of the Democratic National Committee to search for proof

of financial support of the party by the Cuban Government.

Bernard L. Barker, an American citizen who was born in Havana and who has frequently displayed a passionate dis-

*Excerpts from Senate hearing are on Pages 18 and 19.*

taste for Premier Fidel Castro, told the Senate Watergate committee that his search of the Democratic files had been unsuccessful.

Barker, who said that his role in the Watergate affair had been "to obey orders, not to think," added that he and his "team" had hoped their participation in the break-in would speed the "liberation" of Cuba.

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, the Republican vice chairman of the committee, was among those who sought to explore the stolid, matter-of-fact explanations of the witness.

## No Hard Evidence

The Senator asked Barker whether the conspirators had "any reason to believe" that documentation of financial support by the Castro Government existed. The witness replied:

"The fact that the Castro Government was aiding the Democratic party had been rumored and had been spoken of freely in Miami from different organizations of personalities that I had confidence in. However, I have no hard evidence at all that this was true."

Barker, a Miami real estate agent at the time of his arrest in the Watergate last June 17, was active in the anti-Castro underground in the exile community in Florida.

He said that his "prime motivation" for taking part in the

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break-in was the belief that he could later get help from a co-conspirator, E. Howard Hunt Jr., and "others in high places" for the overthrow of Castro.

"How did you think you could liberate Cuba by participating in a burglary in Washington, D. C.?" asked Senator Herman E. Talmadge, Democrat of Georgia, Mr. Barker replied:

"If we helped Mr. Hunt and this Government in matters — which I will further add I believe in—it would establish a situation in which, besides the right that the Cuban people had to be free and independent, it would establish us as having aided this Government in this mission.

"I view that in the same way where hundreds of Cubans have been helping in Africa, in Vietnam and in other areas of the world, where the people in my particular association are extremely grateful to those sectors of this country who favor our liberation. Mr. Hunt represented this to the greatest degree."

Senator Talmadge quickly turned to another line of questioning. Baker's testimony was studded with seeming non sequiturs and unexplained references, but his great admiration for Hunt was persistently expressed.

He said that he had worked directly under Hunt in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, and that Hunt had recruited him, 10 years later, for the burglary of the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist a for the Watergate operation.

Barker said that under Hunt's direction, he had "surreptitiously entered" the psychiatrist's Beverly Hills, Calif., offices in

September, 1961. Dr. Ellsberg had been charged with the theft of the Pentagon papers.

Hunt, Barker said at one point, "represents to the Cuban people their liberation." He also said that Hunt under his Bay of Pigs code name "Eduarde" represented "the anti-Communist symbol" and the "Government of the United States in one form—in its covert form."

Barker said that Hunt had explained that the burglary of the psychiatrist's office "was a matter of national security," and that as other operations came up "at no time was I told any different."

Barker told the committee that he "personally was convinced at the time—and I am today, too—that what I did at the time was correct."

Barker insisted that he had not been under pressure to plead guilty and keep silent about the Watergate scandal, and that he had never been offered executive clemency in return for his guilty plea.

"... You have a code of ethics in work of this kind that you do not tell anything on anybody?" asked Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the North Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the panel.

"That is correct," Barker replied.

"And so if Mr. E. Howard Hunt had pressured you into pleading guilty, you could not tell us that under your code of ethics?" Senator Ervin continued.

## Thrust Brings Laughter

There was laughter in the hearing room as the Senator's attempted trap unfolded.

"This is my decision, not Mr. Hunt's," Barker said.

The exchange continued: SENATOR ERVIN. So you did consult with Mr. E Howard

Hunt before you pleaded guilty?

BARKER. It was not a consultation.

Q. Well, it was a discussion? A. It was a discussion, certainly.

Q. And he told you that he was going to plead guilty, and the evidence against you was overwhelming?

A. That is true.

Q. And then you decided to plead guilty?

A. Yes, but this is not pressure.

James W. McCord Jr., has charged that he had been under pressure to plead guilty and remain silent, and that an Administration aide had offered executive clemency if he would do so.

Barker said that after his arrest he had received from Hunt's wife payments of about \$45,000 or \$47,000 for bail, expenses and lawyers' fees, but he told the committee that this was part of the aid he expected to receive "if you are caught by the enemy."

The witness said, as he has in the past, that neither he nor his men had taken part in the Watergate raid for money. "We are not for sale," he said in a closing statement.



**Bernard L. Barker, who pleaded guilty as a Watergate spy, testifying yesterday. There was a moment of levity as he placed an event in time by referring to a football game.**

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#### AFTERNOON SESSION

##### Bernard L. Barker

MR. HAMILTON. Mr. Barker, who recruited you for these activities?

MR. BARKER. E. Howard Hunt.

Q. And was Mr. Hunt your supervisor in the Watergate operations? A. That is correct.

Q. And had Mr. Hunt also

been your commanding officer in the Bay of Pigs operation? A. I was Mr. Hunt's principal assistant in the Bay of Pigs operation.

Q. Mr. Barker, what was your motivation for participating in these operations.

A. The original operation was the Ellsberg operation. It was explained to me that this was a matter of national security. At no time was I told any different from the original motivation for which I had been recruited.

Q. Mr. Barker, is it correct that part of your motivation for participating in these operations was to gain later assistance from Mr. Hunt and others in high places for a Cuban liberation operation! Is that correct! A. Our team, which was composed of myself and Mr. Martinez, Mr. Sturgis and

Mr. Gonzalez—to us, this was our prime motivation.

Q. What sort of documents were you primarily looking for in the Democratic headquarters! A. I was looking for documents that would involve contributions to a national and foreign agent—The Democratic campaign, especially to Senator McGovern, and possibly also to Senator Kennedy.

Q. From any particular foreign government! A. The Foreign government that existed on the island of Cuba.

Q. Were any documents of this particular type found during the first entry into the Watergate! A. No, sir.

Q. Mr. Barker, were any offers of executive clemency transmitted to you or threats communicated to you in order to induce you to remain silent? A. No.

Q. Would you tell this committee why you chose to plead guilty? A. I was guilty. I was caught inside the national Democratic headquarters at 2:30 in the morning.

#### National Security Matter

MR. THOMPSON. Was it your opinion at that time that it was a C.I.A. operation? A. The only opinion that I can intelligently make is that it was a result of the operation in which I was involved. It was explained at that particular time and place that national security was above F.B.I. and C.I.A.

However, there was a doubt in my mind at that time to the effect of what did it mean, what did national security mean as above F.B.I. or C.I.A.? and that question has still not been solved in my mind.

Q. Let me ask you this: Do you recall a trip you took in a taxi to Mr. Bittman's office after a day of trial with Mr. McCord and Mr. Alch and Mr. Shankman? What is your recollection of that? A. I went there to meet Mr. Rothblatt. And to the best of my recollection, nothing was discussed, nothing was told to me about

the meetings that the attorneys had that I can remember at this time.

Q. Mr. McCord testified Tuesday morning to this effect in response to the following questions from Senator Talmadge: "Did Mr. Barker or other Cuban-Americans come to you during the trial and tell you they had been offered executive clemency by Mr. Hunt." Mr. McCord says, "Yes, sir." Is that true? A. I do not know whether he was saying the truth or not, but I was never offered clemency by anyone.

Q. Mr. Hunt told you [the evidence was overwhelming]? A. Mr. Hunt told me that he had been advised by his attorney that the evidence against us was overwhelming. Mr. Hunt had not been caught inside of the Watergate, I had. I considered him a very intelligent—and still do—capable man, and if Mr. Hunt at the time was going to plead guilty and I was caught inside, I think it would be ridiculous and it has been proven for me to plead anything but guilty.

#### His Own Decision

SENATOR EVIN. If Mr. E. Howard Hunt had pressured you into pleading guilty, you could not tell us that under your code of ethics? A. I do not think that this applies to anything like that for this nature. It was my decision.

Q. He told you that he was going to plead guilty and the evidence against you was overwhelming? A. That is true.

Q. And then you decided to plead guilty? A. Yes, but this is not pressure. This is my decision, not his decision.

SENATOR BAKER. You have a real estate business in Miami. You were previously involved in the Bay of Pigs operations for the C.I.A. You are a veteran of the U. S. Army in World War II where you were a captain in the Arm Air Corps. You were a German prisoner of war for 17 months.

Mr. Baker, what on earth would motivate you at your station in life, at your age and with that background, to do something that surely you knew to be illegal?

A. Senator, E. Howard Hunt under the name of Eduardo, represents to the Cuban people their liberation. I cannot deny my services in the way that it was proposed to me on a matter of national security, knowing that with my trainin

I had personnel available for this type of operation. I could not deny this request at the time.

Q. Why were you concerned with infiltration of a group which was demonstrati either against the war or in presence of the last rites for J. Edgar Hoover? Why did yo do that? A. I was following Mr. Hunt's instructions.

Q. What was your motivation? What persuaded you to enter the Watergate complex? A. Our mission at those times were only to obtain and to try to locate documents that would prove that the Democratic party and Senator McGovern were receiving contributions nationally and—national and foreign contributions from organizations that were leftist organizations and inclined to violence in the United States, and also from the Castro government.

Q. Did you ever find any such documentation? A. No, we did not find these documents. No, sir.

Senator Talmadge. How did you get involved in the Bay of Pigs operation? A. The same way I got involved in the Ellsberg one. I considered it my duty to help my country.

Q. Mr. Hunt recruited you? A. That is in Cuba. No. In Cuba.

Q. Who? A. At the American Embassy.

Q. Who did you think your backers were? A. Sir, I was not there to think. I was there to follow orders, not to think.

Q. Didn't you wonder who was giving you the orders? A. No. I had absolute confidence in, as I do now, the people I was dealing with, sir.

Q. Who did you think you were working for? A. I was working for Mr. Hunt and those things that Mr. Hunt represents.

Q. What did he represent?

A. Eduardo represents the liberation of Cuba, the anti-Communist symbol. It represents the Government of the United States in one form,

in its covert form.

Q. How did you think you could liberate Cuba by participating in a burglary in Washington, D.C.?

A. If we helped Mr. Hunt and this Government in matters which I will further add I believe in, it would establish a situation in which, besides the right that the Cuban people have to be free and independent, it would establish us as having aided this Government in this mission. I view that in the same way where hundreds of Cubans have been helping in Africa, in Vietnam, and in other areas of the world, where the people in my particular association are extremely grateful to those sectors of this country who favor our liberation. Mr. Hunt represented this to the greatest degree.

SENATOR CURNEY. About the [Ellsberg] mission, be as brief as possible because I want to get to the Watergate. A. Mr. Hunt gave me the address of the place where we were to make the entry. Then the general plan was given to us. We proceeded to the area, and eventually made the entry. I personally searched for those documents.

#### Search Is Described

Q. What documents? A. A file of Daniel Ellsberg at his psychiatrists office. This file was not there. I would searched file from file cabinet. I searched his desk and the file cabinet. The men also helped me in the search. The only thing that I found in connection with him was an address book which had his name. This we photographed, and we also photographed the file cabinet to prove that we—we had forced them open, and then we left.

SENATOR NOUYE. You are a wise man. You know that if Mr. Hunt did in fact tell you to keep silent, he would be guilty of the crime of obstructing justice? A. Pardon me if I smile, Senator. If I was a wise man, I would not probably be sitting right here.

SENATOR WICKER. Now, Mr. Barker, it is 1973. Do you still feel that national security is a proper justification for Watergate? A. I feel it was a proper justification for Ellsberg and, although not in the same degree, I feel it was a justification for Watergate. But, quite frankly, I am just a human being. I get confused about all these things. Sometimes I do not know the answers to these questions. I do not pretend to have all the answers, sir.