

Baldwin, Barker: unalike as 2 witnesses could be

5/25/73
Chicago Tribune Press Service

WASHINGTON, May 24—Bernard L. Barker, inmate; Alfred C. Baldwin III, self-employed security guard—two men caught up in the Watergate scandal, but today as unalike as fate could make two men.

Barker, 55, balding and nervous finished his testimony before the Senate Watergate committee choking back tears.

Baldwin, 36, followed and, almost blithely, told of the night of June 17, 1972, that Barker and the Watergate burglars were caught red-handed.

BALDWIN, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, had been across the street from the Watergate offices that night, in his role as monitor for the bugs previously planted in the Democratic National Committee offices. He agreed to testify against the others and won immunity from prosecution.

But Barker, who pleaded guilty at his trial in Federal District Court here, faces a doubtful future. Judge John Sirica hung a 40-year provisional sentence on him and hinted that it could be a good

bit shorter if Barker and his colleagues cooperated in the Senate hearings.

Today, Barker appeared to be a man cooperating with all his might, but with dignity.

AS HE WOUND up his testimony, he said in a trembling voice:

"I am part of a team with which I am very proud to be associated. . . . We'll have to live with the word 'burglar.'

"But we resent, very emotionally, the words that we were hired. There was no need to buy our silence. We were not for sale. . . . We're just plain people who very truthfully believed that Cuba has a right to live."

Barker was born in Cuba and spent half his life there. When he was recruited for the Watergate burglary by E. Howard Hunt, one of those convicted, he had been living in Miami's Cuban community as a real estate broker.

BARKER HAD served in Cuba's national police force in 1947 and 1948. His World War II service in the United States Air Force took him over Germany as a bombardier and

landed him in a prison camp for 16 months when his plane was shot down.

The advent of Fidel Castro had sent him fleeing from Cuba. He had been Hunt's assistant in planning the Bay of Pigs attack on Cuba for the Central Intelligence Agency. He insisted that he followed Hunt's directions in the bug-ging scandal for what he could do for national security and for the eventual liberation of Cuba. The hint that money had anything to do with it produced in Barker an anguish that you could almost feel in the crowded hearing room.

NOT THAT Baldwin got rich on the Watergate job. The pudgy Marine Corps captain—who had greeted the arrest of his friends in the Watergate with the joking question: Does this mean I lose my job?—prefaced his testimony today by saying that his family had been disgraced and he was broke and unable to get work.

But as Baldwin was excused to return to his home in New Haven, Conn., Barker was back in his cell in the District of Columbia jail thinking about that 40-year stretch.