

Barker Out On Bail, Has No Regrets

115774

By J. Y. Smith

Washington Post Staff Writer

At 3:50 p.m. yesterday, Bernard L. Barker, the right side of his face sagging from a paralysis that afflicted him while he was in prison, stepped off a plane at National Airport in the company of two U.S. marshals and into a barrage of cameras and the silent embraces of his wife, Clara, and his daughter, Maria-Elena Moffett.

Two hours later, he was back at the airport and declared that it had been "a very wonderful day, after a year in prison." He and his wife then boarded a plane for Miami, where they live.

Between his two brief appearances at the airport, Barker made a trip to the U.S. Courthouse here, where he was released on bail pending the outcome of appeals from his conviction as one of five men found inside the Watergate headquarters of the Democratic National Committee on June 17, 1972.

Last Jan. 15, Barker and three other Watergate defendants pleaded guilty to conspiracy, burglary and illegal wiretapping and eavesdropping before U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica. Barker has been in prison ever since. In November, he was transferred to the federal minimum security facility at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

Barker, 56, said yesterday that "nothing has happened" to change his conviction that what he did in the break-in was correct. Moreover, he expressed "the greatest respect" for President Nixon.

Mrs. Moffett, 26, who lives in Alexandria, said she was "very elated" that her father was free, at least for now.

Her father, a Cuban-born



By Gerald Martineau—The Washington Post

Watergate burglar Bernard L. Barker, in Washington for court appearance, is greeted on arrival at National Airport by his daughter, Maria-Elena Moffett.

realty dealer, is the third of the original defendants in the case to be released on bond. E. Howard Hunt, who recruited Barker and three others for the Watergate entry, was released last Wednesday. James W. McCord is free on \$5,000 bond. Hunt and Barker were released on personal bond.

Three of Barker's codefendants, Eugenio R. Martinez, Virgilio R. Gonzalez, and Frank A. Sturgis are still in the Eglin facility. They are scheduled for a parole hearing in Washington Monday. If parole is denied, they will seek release on bond pending appeals, according to Daniel E. Schultz, an attorney in the case.

Barker said his immediate plans were to get some rest to try to cure his facial paralysis, which he said had been diagnosed by prison doctors as Bell's palsy. He also said he hoped to raise money to pay legal fees and to take up again his career in real estate.