

\$1,000 a Month for Guilty Plea

By MARTIN SCHRAM

Newsday Service

WASHINGTON. — Four Watergate case defendants are being urged to cut their trial short and plead guilty, by a group which promises to pay each of them \$1,000 for every month spent in jail, plus a lump sum when they are released.

Sources close to the defendants identified the group only as "friends from Miami, in-

cluding a prominent figure in the Bay of Pigs invasion. These "friends" made their offer this week in private meetings with the defendants.

THE FOUR defendants in question have been identified by the sources as Bernard L. Barker, Eugenio Martinez, Frank Sturgis and Virgilio Gonzales. All are from Miami, and worked with the Central Intelligence Agency on the Bay of Pigs invasion.

The attorney for these defendants, Henry Rothblatt, is said to be strongly urging his clients to reject the offer and continue to stand trial. Rothblatt is said to have told his clients that if they decide to enter guilty pleas, they first will have to fire him as their counsel.

In making the offer, the Miami group apparently hopes to end the trial before information is brought out in

Philadelphia
INQUIRER

Offered 4 Watergate Defendants

the Federal court proceedings which might damage their undisclosed interests.

WHILE THE OFFER has created divisions among the defendants, sources said that as of Thursday night the four men had not decided whether to plead guilty.

However, on Friday there were strong signs that the men had decided to take the offer and plead guilty.

Chief U. S. District Judge

John J. Sirica held secret conferences with the six remaining Watergate bugging defendants and their attorneys Friday.

When the meeting was over, Rothblatt said, "There will be no change of plea as long as I am on the case." But he hinted that he might not be on the case very much longer, indicating the plea may be changed.

Asked if there might be a

new attorney coming into the trial when it resumes Monday morning, Rothblatt replied, "the judge's wrath might be aroused if I answered that."

Sirica had ordered that discussions in the conferences be kept secret.

SHOULD the four Miamians change their pleas to guilty, only two Watergate defendants would be left — G. Gor-

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JUDGE SIRICA
... creates storm

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don Liddy, former general counsel to the Finance Committee for the Re-Election of the president, and James W. McCord Jr., former security coordinator for the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

There has been no indication that Liddy or McCord might also try to enter guilty pleas.

Indications of dissension at the defense table began when Rothblatt arrived at the U. S. Court house Friday morning without his clients for the first

time. They had come earlier by themselves.

When court convened shortly after 9:30 A. M., Barker whispered briefly in Rothblatt's ear and then walked over to the prosecution table and handed a typewritten letter to Chief Assistant U. S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert.

The contents of the letter were not disclosed, but it immediately became the apparent object of a protracted discussion at the bench between the judge and all attorneys involved in the case.