

Four More Guilty Pleas Entered in Bugging Trial

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Four more of the Watergate political espionage defendants pleaded guilty today, leaving only two of the original seven defendants on trial.

The guilty plea was entered by a new court appointed attorney of Bernard L. Barker, Eugenio R. Martinez, Frank A. Surgis, Virgilio R. Gonzalez, all from the Miami area.

The plea brought to five the total number of defendants who have withdrawn from the

trial since it opened a week ago. Last Wednesday, former White House consultant E. Howard Hunt pleaded guilty to all charges.

The exit of four more defendants, leaving only two at the once crowded defense table, raised serious questions as to whether the trial could continue.

However, the trial judge almost immediately refused to declare a mistrial for the two remaining defendants.

Gerald Alch, attorney for one of the remaining defendants, James W. McCord Jr., said before court opens that he would seek a mistrial if the guilty pleas were offered, claiming the jury would conclude, even though it wouldn't be told, that the others had admitted guilt. The other remaining defendant is G. Gordon Liddy.

The new guilty pleas were offered by court-appointed attorney Al Newmeyer, in lieu of New York Lawyer Henry B. Rothblatt, who had represented the four through the first week of trial but has refused to have them plead guilty.

Like Hunt, the four were required to plead guilty to all of the counts against them.

Rothblatt said he was opposed to guilty pleas and

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would quit the case before allowing it to happen.

He said they have nothing to gain by pleading guilty. "They'll go to jail, they'll waive their constitutional right to appeal and they will serve many years in prison as a result of the orders."

They were charged with espionage and face maximum sentences of eight years in prison.

tences of 55 years each. All four have CIA backgrounds dating from the Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion.

Sources close to the defense had said earlier that the Miami four had been under intense pressure to plead guilty and avoid a full airing of the charges against them, stemming from the burglary of Democratic party headquarters here last summer. The withdrawal of five of the sev-

en defendants makes it unlikely that the full evidence in the case will be made public at least in this trial.

Before the guilty pleas were announced, U. S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica revealed that the Miamians had written a letter last Friday fir-

ing Rothblatt as their lawyer because of his refusal to change their pleas to guilty. At their request, Sirica appointed Newmeyer for the purpose of presenting new pleas.

The Washington Post today quoted sources close to the de-

fendants as saying Hunt has led the four to believe that if they plead guilty their families "will be taken care of" and they can expect relatively early release from prison.

Hunt's attorney William O. Bittman, said this report was "absurd," the Post said.