

Man in the News

McCord's Lawyer Reportedly Urged Him to Spill Story

By REM RIEDER

Bulletin Washington Bureau

Washington — According to his lawyer, James W. McCord Jr. is a clean-living, colorless, middle-aged man who simply "didn't fit in" with his more flamboyant Watergate coconspirators.

McCord, said attorney Bernard Fensterwald Jr. in an interview, "is a very strong family man, a rather religious man."

The lawyer, a veteran of several Washington controversies, depicted E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy as pleasure seekers, fond of tipping with \$100 bills on junkets to Las Vegas.

McCord, who has been convicted of breaking into and bugging Democratic headquarters, was "appalled" by these goings-on, Fensterwald said.

Hunt, a former Central Intelligence Agency man, is known for his planning role in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion and his authorship of numerous sex-and-spy novels. Liddy, a former White House staff member, is said to be a fancier of firearms who suggested bugging the New York Times during the Pentagon Papers controversy.

Technician

But McCord, said Fensterwald, is a "technician" at heart.

Fensterwald, a 52-year-old Washington lawyer, made a belated but significant entry into the Watergate case in February, after McCord already had been convicted.

Some observers believe the attorney played a major role in McCord's decision the following month to cooperate with the authorities.

McCord's dramatic letter to Federal Judge John J. Sirica and ensuing disclosures triggered a sequence of events which have shaken the White

House and the country, and which are expected to result in the indictments of high-ranking present and former Nixon Administration officials.

Wanted Advice

Fensterwald recalled that McCord telephoned him shortly before his scheduled sen-

tencing and said he wanted some advice.

"When he came in, he indicated he was going to take some radical action," Fensterwald said. "He said he was going to break the case wide open."

While McCord did not say precisely what he had in mind, "I encouraged him to go ahead," the lawyer said.

In his now-famous letter, McCord, one-time security coordinator for President Nixon's reelection committee, said the Watergate defendants had been pressured to plead guilty and remain silent. He said perjury had been committed at the trial and that principals in the scheme had escaped detection.

Testified

Since then, he has testified before the federal grand jury and a Senate committee investigating political sabotage, implicating former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, presidential counsel to John W. Dean 3d and former White



AP Wirephoto

Bernard Fensterwald Jr.

House aide Jeb Stuart Magruder.

Judge Sirica has said he will take this cooperation into account when sentencing McCord in June.

Fensterwald, unlike McCord,

is no stranger to the spotlight. He was counsel to several highly publicized Senate investigations of the drug industry, price fixing and wiretapping by government investigators.

Fensterwald also formed a committee to investigate the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. He is currently the attorney for James Earl Ray, convicted of the King killing. Last week, Fensterwald went to Tennessee in an effort to get Ray out of solitary confinement.

The wealthy son of a Nashville clothing manufacturer, Fensterwald said he followed the Watergate case with interest from the start because of his lifelong Democratic Party affiliation, and his interest in electronic surveillance and government cover-ups.

Bail Effort

He did not get involved until a mutual friend asked him if he could help get McCord's

\$100,000 bail reduced. As it turned out, he could not — another McCord lawyer already had filed a motion to reduce, and that was soon rejected.

But Fensterwald did help raise the \$100,000 which freed McCord.

The lawyer says McCord's wife played a major role in raising the money. Asked about reports that he personally put up \$40,000, Fensterwald said only, "I put up some money."

No Blabbermouth

Fensterwald said the impression that McCord is "a blabbermouth dragging people through the mud with hearsay testimony" is unfair.

"He has no first-hand knowledge of who approved the wiretapping or who got the benefits," the lawyer said. "If they (investigators) don't want answers (based on hearsay), don't ask him questions."

Fensterwald says McCord is eager to tell the public the entire story of his involvement