

E. Howard Hunt Home With Children Pending Appeal Of Prison Term

Washington (AP)—E. Howard Hunt, his thin face showing the effects of 10 months in prison for the Watergate break-in, is home with his children once again. "I'm free for the time being," he said.

Hunt was released Wednesday, but how long he remains free will be decided by the United States Court of Appeals, which has been asked to rule whether Hunt should have been allowed to withdraw his guilty plea in district court.

"Sufficient Merit"

The higher court ordered Hunt and fellow conspirator Bernard L. Barker freed last Friday pending the outcome of their appeals.

Barker was to be released from prison at Eglin Air Force Base in the Florida panhandle sometime this afternoon in the custody of U.S. marshals, said a prison spokesman. Barker was to be escorted to Washington aboard a commercial flight where he will be freed.

"I find it very encouraging that the court has seen sufficient merit in my appeal to order my release," Hunt said after going through the formalities of pledging he will abide by conditions set by the court.

He also thanked "the many thousands of concerned Americans who have sent me telegrams and letters over these long months." He said "this has made my incarceration far more bearable."

Hunt was reunited with his four children who live in nearby Potomac, Md.

His release and the expected release of Barker would leave four of the original Watergate

defendants still in prison—three of whom could be released soon either by parole board action or appeals court order.

Eugenio R. Martinez, Virgilio R. Gonzalez and Frank A. Sturgis, who pleaded guilty with Hunt and Barker last Jan-

uary, already have served more than their minimum one-year sentence. Their parole board hearing at the federal prison at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida is scheduled Monday.

Appealed Convictions

James W. McCord, Jr., and

G. Gordon Liddy also have appealed their jury convictions. McCord was freed on bond shortly after his arrest in the Democratic Party headquarters June 17, 1972.

Liddy currently is serving a contempt term for refusing to testify before the grand jury under immunity. He still has most of his minimum six years and eight months conspiracy-burglary-wiretap sentence to serve.

Hunt has served 10 months, 5 days of his 2½-8 years sentence. Barker has a minimum 6 months to go on his 18 months term. McCord's sentence is 1-5 years.

McCord, Barker, Sturgis, Gonzalez and Martinez were arrested by plainclothes police inside the Watergate office building. Liddy and Hunt surrendered later.

Duty To Country

In his testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee last September, Hunt said he considered his participation in the break-in and bugging as a duty of his country.

"I thought it was an unwise operation, but I viewed it as lawful," he said then. "I deeply regret that I had any part in his affair. I think it was an unfortunate use of executive power and I am sorry that I did not have the wisdom to withdraw."

Of his incarceration, he said, "I have been physically attacked and robbed in jail. I have suffered a stroke. I have been transferred from place to place, manacled and chained, hand and foot."



UPI Telephoto

OUT OF PRISON—E. Howard Hunt, Jr., wearing an open-collared shirt, leaves the U.S. District Court in Washington after being freed, pending the outcome of his appeal for masterminding the Watergate headquarters break-in.

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