

Watergate wife

linked to payoffs

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Mrs. Dorothy Hunt, who died in the crash of a United Air Lines plane at Midway Airport last December, was a courier of payoffs being made to the Watergate defendants in return for their silence, it was alleged Monday.

Mrs. Hunt was the wife of E. Howard Hunt Jr., a former Central Intelligence Agency official and convicted participant in the Watergate affair.

Among her effects, found in the wreckage of the United plane, were 100 new \$100 bills, bound with a rubberband. One of the Watergate defendants, Miami realtor Bernard L. Barker, had 53 \$100 bills in his possession when he was arrested.

THE ALLEGATION that Mrs. Hunt was a courier of "silence" money was attributed by the New York Times to James W. McCord, Jr., one of seven men given prison terms for their role in the break-in and bugging of Democratic headquarters at the Watergate hotel-apartment complex in Washington.

McCord told a federal grand jury that Kenneth W. Parkinson, a Washington attorney for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, channeled cash payments — always in \$100 bills — to the Watergate defendants after their arrest, the Times reported.

Sources identified by the newspaper as being close to the grand jury investigation were quoted as saying that McCord identified Mrs. Hunt as the conduit of the "silence"

money and said it was Mrs. Hunt who provided him with information about Parkinson's alleged role in the affair.

THE EXISTENCE of such payments had been widely speculated upon, but Monday's allegations marked the first time that anyone connected with the Committee for the Re-election of the President had been linked to them.

Parkinson denied the reports.

"That's absolutely false," he told the New York Times. "I've never met Mr. Hunt or Mrs. Hunt and I've never met any of the other defendants. I've never handled any money myself."

THE SAME sources close to the grand jury investigation reported that McCord had also testified that he believed it was Parkinson who applied "pressure" in an effort to get the Watergate defendants to plead guilty to the break-in and bugging charges — and thus avoid a trial.

Five of the seven defendants did plead guilty, and the other two were convicted.

According to the Times' sources, McCord testified he had last spoken with Mrs. Hunt a week before the Dec. 8 crash at Midway, and that she allegedly expressed anxiety about her role as a courier.

The money which was found in the wreckage of the plane reportedly belonged to her husband, and was being brought to the Chicago area by Mrs. Hunt in order to invest it in a motel.