

Sirica Gives LaRue 6 Months in Cover-up

By Timothy S. Robinson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Frederick C. LaRue, a high-ranking official in Richard M. Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign, was sentenced to six months in prison yesterday for his part in the Watergate cover-up.

LaRue, 46, a wealthy Mississippi businessman who was a White House aide before joining the re-election effort, was given until April 1 to report to an as yet unspecified federal prison.

The sentence was one-to-three years, but all except six months was suspended. LaRue could get out of prison in slightly less than six months by earning time off for good behavior.

He has been free on bond since entering his plea more than 20 months ago. He was the first participant in the cover-up to plead guilty after the original Watergate break-in trial. His plea was considered important by prosecutors because it put pressure on other potential defendants and witnesses to cooperate with the continuing probe.

LaRue's attorney, Fred M.



FREDERICK C. LARUE
... cites cooperation

Vinson Jr., emphasized the early cooperation in his pleadings before U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica yesterday. He asked that LaRue not be jailed.

He said LaRue was unique among Watergate defendants in that he never sought immunity "in any form from anybody" because he did not

See **LARUE, A4, Col. 2**

LARUE, From A1

want to benefit from his testimony, which he knew would be damaging to several long-time friends.

He was also the only defendant aware of the electronic surveillance plan of the re-election committee who specifically recommended against it, Vinson added.

Further emphasizing LaRue's early cooperation, Vinson said that "none of the other (potential defendants) agreed to take the leap, and he agreed to do so at the request of the prosecutors to help the government break the logjam in the case.

"This defendant has been punished enough in his personal and business life," Vinson said.

LaRue, a balding man of medium height who spoke briefly in his own behalf, also focused on his cooperation as the reason he should not be jailed.

"My testimony contributed to the goal" expressed by Sirica in the Watergate cases as a "search for the truth," LaRue said.

He added: "To the extent my activities contributed to Watergate, I am truly sorry."

Sirica then imposed the six-month term on LaRue, acknowledging at the same time the amount of LaRue's cooperation. However, he said a prison term was necessary to avoid a wide disparity in the sentencing of convicted Watergate defendants.

After completing the six-month term, LaRue will be on probation for two years.

Sirica asked the federal Bureau of Prisons to pick a facility in the next two weeks where LaRue can begin serving his sentence.

LaRue, who worked as former Attorney General John N. Mitchell's right-hand man at the Committee for the Re-election of the President, pleaded guilty June 28, 1973, to one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice. He could have been sentenced to five years in jail and fined \$10,000.

He admitted at the time of the plea to take part in a cover-up scheme to destroy incriminating documents and to mislead both the FBI and the original Watergate grand jury with false testimony.

He also acknowledged funneling more than \$300,000 to buy the silence of the seven men initially arrested and convicted for the June, 1972, break-in and bugging of Democratic National Committee headquarters.