

Kalmbach Says He's Grateful 1975

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Herbert W. Kalmbach, who was in Washington for the day under guard, was chatting and munching a hamburger in his lawyer's office here yesterday when the news suddenly came that he was a free man.

"I said, 'I understand you're a free man,'" said Kalmbach's lawyer, Charles A. McNelis. "He was astounded. He sort of welled up and swelled up and there were tears in his eyes."

With that, Kalmbach went to a nearby office to call his wife in California and McNelis went to dismiss the waiting U. S. marshal who was guarding Kalmbach.

Soon, McNelis said, the office filled with reporters and Kalmbach, dressed in a three-piece gray suit came out to make a statement. His voice cracked once.

"I have learned today of the action of Judge Sirica in reducing my sentence in the Watergate matter, which will permit my return to my family," the former personal attorney to Richard M. Nixon said. "My reaction was one of profound gratitude for the compassion of Judge Sirica and renewed appreciation and confidence in the essential fairness of American justice."

"I approach the future with feelings of profound relief in the context of what, of course, is a most unfortunate episode in our nation's history. I feel no bitterness toward anyone, and hope that my actions have served to strengthen the pillars of justice."

Other than that, Kalmbach had little to say. He repeatedly called Watergate a tragedy, said he was hoping to return to his family in California later today, but would not reveal where the

government was keeping him prisoner.

McNelis said that Kalmbach was transferred to a federal prison facility at the Ft. Holabird army installation in Maryland so that he could appear as a witness before last summer's impeachment hearings before the House Judiciary Committee and in the cover-up trial of four former Nixon administration officials. Kalmbach was in town yes-

terday, McNelis said, for interviews at the Watergate special prosecutor's office.

Kalmbach, who secretly raised millions of dollars for the Nixon re-election effort, pleaded guilty to peddling an ambassadorship in an illicit 1970 fund-raising operation organized by the White House. Kalmbach at the time was President Nixon's personal attorney and an important White House fund-raiser.

The 53-year-old California lawyer, a long-time Nixon fund raiser, admitted raising \$3.9 million which the White House later funneled to congressional candidates in the 1970 elections. The fund-raising operation had neither a chairman nor a treasurer, in violation of federal law.

In addition, Kalmbach admitted promising Maryland Republican J. Fife Symington Jr. a European ambassadorship in exchange for a \$100,000 campaign contribution. Symington never received the appointment, but declined a Kalmbach offer to have the money returned.

Kalmbach, who as Mr. Nixon's personal attorney helped arrange the purchase of the San Clemente estate, was sentenced by Sirica to 6 to 18 months in jail. He began serving his sentence July 1 and had already applied for parole, his attorney said.

In contrast to Kalmbach, the other Watergate figures freed yesterday—John Dean and Jeb Stuart Magruder—were not available for comment. They were both reported at the Ft. Holabird prison facility where reporters were massed outside the barbed-wire topped gate waiting for a glimpse of the men.

The Holabird facility, located in a warehouse and industrial area of southeast Baltimore, has been used by the federal government to hold prisoners who are frequently needed in Washington or Baltimore for appearances at trials. In addition to Magruder, Kalmbach and Dean, the fort has held Charles Colson, Mr. Nixon's former special White House counsel, and Joel Kline, the confessed Montgomery County land and stock speculator.