

Excerpts From Interview With Man Who Says

Following are excerpts from an interview by Jack Nelson of The Los Angeles Times with Alfred C. Baldwin 3d of Connecticut, who says that he was a participant in the project last spring to eavesdrop on the offices of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex in Washington.

The interview, which appeared in Thursday's issue of The Los Angeles Times, took place in New Haven at an unspecified date. The excerpts from the article, "by Alfred C. Baldwin 3d as told to Jack Nelson," appear with the permission of The Los Angeles Times.

Across the street in the Democratic National offices I could see men with guns and flashlights looking behind desks and out on the balcony.

It was a weird scene at Washington's Watergate complex. The men were looking for several persons, including my boss—James W. McCord Jr., who was security director for both President Nixon's re-election committee and the Republican National Committee.

A short while later, McCord and four other men, all in handcuffs, would be led by police to patrol cars and taken to jail. And a White House consultant would rush into my motel room across the street from the Democratic offices and peer down on the scene before fleeing the area.

I had been using a walkie-talkie and acting as a lookout for McCord and his men, who were engaged in a bugging operation. For three weeks I had monitored conversation on a tapped phone in the Democratic offices.

My mission had been to record all conversations. McCord appeared to be especially interested in any information on Senator McGovern and the Democratic party chairman, Lawrence O'Brien, and anything having to do with political strategy.

Like myself, McCord is an ex-F.B.I. agent. But he also served 20 years in the Central Intelligence Agency, and he is one of those ex-C.I.A. men who do more listening than talking. When he wants you to do something else, he just tells you. No buildup or anything.

Never Questioned Orders

I never questioned McCord's orders. I felt he was acting under orders and with full authority. After all, his boss, was John Mitchell, the committee director and former Attorney General of the United States.

My involvement with the committee began May 1 when McCord telephoned my home in Hamden, Conn. He had secured a résumé I had filed with the society of ex-F.B.I. agents in New York and had reviewed it and several other résumés on file with this society. He felt that because of my age, background and marital status—I am 36 and single—I was best suited for the position.

He said they [the committee] needed someone immediately, so I took a plane to Washington that night and registered at the Roger Smith Hotel where we met the next morning. He emphasized that although the job was temporary, it could be a stepping stone to a permanent position after President Nixon's re-election.

We walked a block down the street to the re-election committee headquarters at 1701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., a block from the White House, and McCord took me on a tour of committee offices on several

floors. As different persons passed, McCord would say things like, "That's so and so, he's from the White House" or, "There's another one who's on loan from the White House."

We went to the office of Fred La Rue to get approval for my employment, and McCord said, "Mr. La Rue is over from the White House. He's John Mitchell's right-hand man."

La Rue was friendly enough, but very businesslike. McCord read some brief data he had jotted down on the back of an envelope: "Al Baldwin, ex-F. B. I. agent, former Marine captain, law degree, taught police science. . . ."

McCord later issued me a loaded .38-snub-nosed police special and said, "You'll wear this." I had no permit or official identification and questioned whether I was authorized to carry it.

Moved To Motel

At McCord's direction, I moved from the Roger Smith Hotel to the Howard Johnson Motel across the street from the Watergate. I checked into Room 419, which he had registered under McCord Associates, the name of his security firm.

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He Helped in Bugging

of Democrats

McCord gave me a code name, Bill Johnson, and instructed me to investigate antiwar demonstrations that were occurring in Washington about that time. I was supposed to try to learn of any plans of demonstrators to damage Republican headquarters or to disrupt the Republican convention in Miami in August.

On May 24, after about two weeks of covering demonstrations, I visited my home in Hamden. When I returned to Washington the next day, I found Jim McCord in Room 419 surrounded by an array of electrical equipment, including walkie-talkies and the debugging case that had been in his office at the re-election committee.

A sophisticated receiving set, which McCord later said was worth approximately \$15,000, was in a large blue Samsonite suitcase. There was a portable radio with shortwave band and an array of tape recorders and other pieces of equipment.

McCord said, "I want to show you some of this equipment and how we're going to use it."

"You'll be doing some monitoring on this equipment," he said, and proceeded to show me how to operate the monitoring unit.

Tap Put On Phone

Then he took the room telephone apart and inserted a tap in it. To test the device, he dialed a local number for a recorded announcement. The tap picked up the message.

McCord pointed across the street to the Watergate and said, "We're going to put some units over there tonight, and you'll be monitoring them." He didn't have to tell me; I knew the Democratic National Committee offices were in the Watergate.

From the balcony outside Room 419, I watched McCord walk across Virginia Avenue and enter the Watergate complex. Subsequently, he appeared at a window of the Democratic offices, and I could see at least one other person and perhaps two with him.

McCord later returned to the motel room and said, "We've got the units over there." He began adjusting the monitoring unit.

We were not sure whose telephones had been tapped. They had tapped one telephone they believed belonged to Lawrence O'Brien and

had tapped another one they hoped belonged to a staff official close to O'Brien.

McCord finally picked up a conversation on one phone on the monitoring unit. At first we thought the phone was used by a man named Spencer, then we decided it was used by a man named Oliver. Finally, we realized it was used by a man named Spencer Oliver, who happened to be coordinator of the State Democratic party chairmen.

A number of persons besides Oliver used his phone, too. Over the next three weeks I would monitor approximately 200 telephone conversations. Some dealing with political strategy and others concerning personal matters.

There was no set time for monitoring. The Democrats worked weird hours, like on Sundays and some days until 3 or 4 in the morning. And when I was in the room, I was monitoring from the time I got up until I went to bed.

Kept Logs in Duplicate

The first couple of days I monitored it, I wrote a log of the calls in longhand. But after that McCord brought a typewriter, and I typed the logs from my notes. I kept them in duplicate and gave both copies to McCord.

McCord would come by once or twice a day to pick up the logs. Sometimes the logs would be only a page or two long, but on a busy day they might run to six pages.

When something important in the logs would catch McCord's eye, he would quickly sit down and type up a memo from information in the logs. He would start the memo with, "A confidential source reports."

A few days after the monitoring began, McCord instructed me to find another room that would give us a better view of the Democratic offices and perhaps help us establish contact with the tap there that we had been unable to monitor.

I checked us into Room 723 with a view directly across from the Democratic offices.

About June 6, McCord left for Miami, advising that he would be gone only a day. The next day he telephoned, however, and said he had been delayed. I replied that I had recorded some important conversations. He did not want to discuss them on the telephone but instructed me to deliver my original logs to an official at the President's re-election committee.

Gave Data to Guard

He said he put the logs in an envelope and to staple and tape the envelope. He gave me the name of an official, and I wrote it on an envelope. It was someone I believed was superior to McCord, although I can't recall his name, but it was not Liddy or Hunt.

That evening I carried the envelope to the committee headquarters. An elderly guard was on duty in the lobby of the building, and he took the envelope, recognized the name on it and said he would see to it that the official received it.

For about two weeks we had been trying without success to determine O'Brien's whereabouts. Also McCord was interested in the precise location of O'Brien's office, since he was uncertain that the tap he had been unable to monitor was actually on O'Brien's phone.

On June 12 McCord told me to visit the Democratic Committee offices under my code name to find out what I could about O'Brien's whereabouts and the location of his office. Since I am from

Connecticut and familiar with the Democratic party officials there, I passed myself off as a nephew of our state chairman, John Bailey.

"This is Bill Johnson of Connecticut, a nephew of John Bailey," said a secretary who introduced me around.

O'Brien's secretary said, "Oh, yes, would you like to see Mr. O'Brien's office? This used to be your uncle's office."

I made a mental note of the office's location overlooking the Potomac River, and I asked if anyone knew O'Brien's whereabouts. His secretary said he was somewhere in Miami, and subsequently I was furnished O'Brien's telephone number in Miami.

Gave Number to McCord

I returned to the motel room and gave McCord the number, and we went over a sketch of O'Brien's office. He seemed extremely pleased.

There were also plans to return to McGovern's headquarters on the weekend. McCord said, "You know the place we were at the other night? We've got to go back there."

Later, Liddy and Hunt came into the motel room. With McCord they walked out on the balcony and looked over toward the Democratic offices.

Before Liddy left, he reached into his inside coat pocket and withdrew an envelope containing a thick stack of brand new \$100 bills. He counted off about 16 or 18 bills and handed them to McCord, who put them in his wallet.

On Friday evening, June 16, McCord displayed a unit that I thought looked like door chimes. He removed the unit's cover, exposing a sophisticated electronic device.

Then to test the device he put it next to the television set and turned the set on. The unit picked up the television reception. It was a bug, as opposed to a telephone tap, and was the first listening device I had ever seen unattached to a phone.

McCord indicated to me that in addition to placing new devices at the Democratic headquarters, the unit we had been unable to monitor would either be removed from the offices or put in a new location in the offices.

We both continued working on the devices for some time. During a telephone conversation, McCord said he might have to wait until another night to carry out the mission . . . some guy was still working in the Democratic offices.

Light Goes Off

Suddenly I saw the light in the committee offices go off, and I told McCord, "Hey look. The guy's leaving now."

McCord told the other party that the light had been turned off, and that they could proceed. Then he handed me a walkie-talkie and said he was going across the street. He said, "If you see anything unusual, any activity, anybody around, you get on this and let us know."

He took his wallet, change, car keys and other items from his trouser pockets and dropped them on the bed. He left the room with a rain coat over his arm. After he left, I noticed that the listening device that looked like door chimes was missing.

I walked out on the balcony and watched him cross Virginia Avenue and walk into the Watergate complex.

Less than an hour later, the lights on the entire floor above the Democratic Committee offices went on. I picked up the walkie-talkie —I don't remember whether

I identified myself as "Unit 1" or "Base"—but I said, "We've got some activity."

A man whose voice I did not recognize—it was not McCord—responded, "What have you got?"

I mentioned the lights going on, and he replied, "Okay, we know about that, that's the 2 o'clock guard check. Let us know if the lights go on any other place."

My watch indicated it was 2:15. I figured the guard check was late.

A Car Arrives

Not long after that a car parked in front of the Watergate, and three men got out and went inside. I wondered if that meant anything, but I did not use the walkie-talkie at that time.

Suddenly, a few minutes later, the lights went on inside the Democratic offices. I noticed the figures of three men. At least two of them came out on the balcony. They were casually dressed and were carrying flashlights and guns. I could see one man in the office holding a gun in front of him and looking behind desks.

Watching from the balcony outside my room, I grabbed the walkie-talkie and said, "Base to any unit." A voice came back: "What have you got?"

I said, "Are our people dressed casually or are they in suits?"

An anxious voice asked, "What?" I repeated the question.

"Our people are dressed in suits," the voice said.

"Well," I answered, "we've got problems. We've got some people dressed casually, and they've got guns. They're looking around the balcony and everywhere, but they haven't come across our people."

The man on the other end sounded absolutely panic stricken now and started calling: "Are you reading this? Are you reading this?"

Receiving no reply, he then added: "They don't have the unit on, or it's not turned up. Are you still in the room?"

"I replied, "Right."

He said: "Stay there. I'll be right over."

By now, there was all kinds of police activity — motor-

cycles and paddywagons driving up, and guys jumping out of patrol cars and running up to the Watergate. Then I saw two men carrying suitcases. I recognized one as Hunt. He glanced up at the balcony where I stood, and then with the other man walked over and entered a car parked in front of the Watergate. The two of them drove away.

'Police Are All Over'

Moments later I was contacted on the walkie-talkie again and told: "We're on the way up. Be there in a minute." I said, "You'd better not park near this building, police are all over the place."

He said, "Okay."

Then I heard a voice from another unit whisper, "They've got us." Then McCord's voice came through: "What are you people? Are you metropolitan police or what?"

Another voice demanded: "What's that?" And then the unit went silent. I tried to renew the contact, but to no avail.

A few minutes later Hunt, wearing a windbreaker, rushed into the room. He was extremely nervous.

"What do you see?" he asked.

I told him I saw McCord and some other man being led away from the Watergate in handcuffs. He walked over, looked down at the scene and then said: "I've got to a call a lawyer."

Picking up the phone, he dialed a local number. "They've had it," he told the party on the other end, adding: "Well, I've got \$5,000 in cash with me we can use for bond money."

Hunt, hanging up the phone, turned and asked if I knew where the McCord lived. I said yes, I had been to his house in Rockville. He instructed me to pack all the equipment and take it to McCord's house and asked if I had a place to go.

I said I could go to my home in Connecticut, and he said, "Well, get all this stuff out of here, and you get out of here. Somebody will be in touch with you."

With that, he threw his walkie-talkie on the bed and rushed from the room. "Does that mean I'm out of a job?" I shouted after him. But he disappeared down the hallway without answering.