

M'CORD REPORTED TO GIVE SENATORS 'SIGNIFICANT' DATA

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Convicted Watergate Figure
Questioned Over 4 Hours
in Closed Panel Session

HUNT GETS IMMUNITY

But He Refuses to Answer
Queries About Others at
Grand Jury Meeting
NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, March 28—James W. McCord Jr., in a carefully guarded closed session today, provided the Senate's select committee on the Watergate conspiracy with information that was described by one Senator as "significant."

The onetime security coordinator for President Nixon's political organization, convicted in January of spying on the Democrats last year, spent more than four hours answering questions at the Capitol meeting.

The atmosphere was described as one of "cooperation, not antagonism," and each of the six Senators on hand for the interrogation was understood to have asked McCord a number of questions. He was the panel's first witness.

None of the participants gave any immediate indication of the substance of the testimony, and it was apparent that each of them had received usually strong warnings against doing so.

More Information Expected

"Anybody who talks now jeopardizes the end result," said Senator Lowell P. Weicker, Republican of Connecticut. Disclosure now, he added, could create "legal problems."

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., the Tennessee Republican who is vice chairman of the committee, said upon emerging from the session that McCord had provided "a great deal . . . significant information" and that he expected to receive "a lot more."

Mr. Baker, who said he had "no evaluation to make" of McCord as a witness, announced that the committee would call the convicted political espionage agent for a second session next Wednesday.

While McCord was talking with apparent readiness at the capitol, one of his co-conspirators balked at discussing details of the Watergate affair before a Federal grand jury several blocks away, even with a grant of immunity.

The Government moved this morning to force E. Howard Hunt Jr. to answer questions dealing with the involvement of any others and with espionage activities related to the case. Hunt pleaded guilty at the trial in January in the break-in and bugging of the Democratic headquarters last year at the Watergate complex here.

Charge of 'Pressure'

McCord was taken before the Senate committee after two private sessions with its chief counsel, Samuel Dash, in which he said that two Nixon Administration figures had advance knowledge of the Watergate operation.

He had written a letter charging that "others" were involved in the case and that "political pressure" had been exerted on those captured to "plead guilty and remain silent."

In the interviews with Mr. Dash last Friday and Saturday, McCord was understood to have promised that he would back up much of his testimony with documentary material, which was not publicly described.

"Find out what McCord promised to bring [to the committee session] next week," a source present at the meeting today was said to have remarked afterward. "There's

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your story."

The session today, which began at 1:30 P.M. and ended a few minutes after 6 P.M., was held in a chamber on the first floor of the Capitol with a large crowd of reporters and photographers waiting outside. Several policemen barred the public from the immediate vicinity.

Ervin Misses Meeting

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the North Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, was absent from the gathering today because of the death of his brother.

Mr. Dash, who had received some criticism for disclosing

his earlier interviews with McCord, came from the meeting today repeatedly citing a Senate rule that prohibits disclosure of testimony at an executive session.

Senator Joseph M. Montoya, Democrat of New Mexico, said only that it "takes time to digest a few things" in the McCord testimony.

The panel plans no more meetings before McCord returns next week, Senator Baker declared. He and other sources had suggested public hearings would be held as quickly as possible, but there was no mention today of a time.

McCord, accompanied by one of his attorneys, Bernard Fensterwald of Washington, walked from the Capitol without comment and was driven away in the lawyer's old gray Thunderbird.

He is said to have told Mr. Dash in the earlier interviews that John W. Dean 3d, counsel to the President, and Jeb Stuart Magruder, onetime deputy director of Mr. Nixon's campaign unit, had prior knowledge of the bugging.

The allegation was denied by Mr. Magruder and on Mr. Dean's behalf by the White House. There have been reports that McCord had told Mr. Dash he could supply the committee with other names of people involved.

Hunt, a former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency who served as a consultant to the White House, was taken from the District of Columbia Jail to the United States Court-house for his second session with the grand jurors.

Request for Immunity

He testified for about an hour and 20 minutes yesterday afternoon with the Government making no move to grant immunity from further prosecution. But the move for immunity came within 20 minutes of his appearance today.

The Government took Hunt before Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District here and explained at a brief hearing that Hunt had invoked his Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination.

The judge's approval of immunity, which came without objection from the convicted conspirator's attorney, means that if he continues to decline to answer the grand jury's questions he can be held in contempt of court.

After the proceeding, Hunt was led back before the panel and spend nearly four hours in the closed session. Neither his lawyers nor the prosecution would indicate the substance of his testimony.

The questions Hunt had declined to answer earlier, read at the immunity proceeding by

a grand jury stenographer, included one dealing with anyone who had prior knowledge of the wiretapping and one dealing with the source of some of his funds.

Hunt had also invoked the Fifth Amendment when asked whether he knew who had received copies of logs outlining the substance of conversations overheard on the wiretaps at Democratic headquarters.

Question on Recruits

Besides those mentioned at the trial, he had been asked, "was there anyone else you recruited for the purpose of spying on Democratic candidates for office, national or local, or in other illegal activities such as burglary or attempted electronic surveillance?"

Hunt is known to have been in contact with Donald H. Segretti, a California lawyer who has been linked with a wider campaign of espionage organized by Republicans to harass the opposition last year.

The former C.I.A. agent said upon pleading guilty in January that, to his knowledge, there was no one else involved in the conspiracy and that a wider espionage campaign had not been mounted.

His attorney, William E. Bittman, of Washington, said yesterday that Hunt still took that position. He presumably could maintain it under the immunity grant.

Today, Judge Sirica announced that, because McCord had gone to the Senators and would also appear before the grand jury, he saw "no need to go forward with the private conference" that had been arranged.

The judge had agreed to meet in a closed session with McCord sometime this week after the convicted man had said he was unwilling to talk about the case with officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department.

McCord's sentencing was postponed after his letter was read in court last week. It is currently scheduled to take place Friday morning, when the other defendants will be given a chance to promise cooperation with Federal investigators.



The New York Times/George James

James W. McCord at the Capitol yesterday after he testified at a closed Senate hearing on the Watergate case.