

LARUE SENTENCED TO 6-MONTH TERM

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Rest of Penalty Suspended
for Former Nixon Aide
Who Aided Prosecution
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WASHINGTON, March 14— Frederick C. LaRue, once a power in the Nixon White House and the 1972 Nixon campaign and then a key prosecution witness at the Watergate cover-up trial, was sentenced by Judge John J. Sirica today to six months in prison for his admitted role in the cover-up.

Mr. LaRue, who pleaded guilty in June, 1973, to a single count of conspiracy to obstruct justice, was the first defendant to plead guilty in the cover-up and the last to be sentenced of the eight men who were convicted in the case either through guilty pleas or jury verdicts.

His sentencing thus appears to close the first and basic phase of the cover-up prosecution. Only the appellate phase remains—the appeals of the four men convicted Jan. 1 at

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the cover-up trial.

Minutes before the judge imposed sentence, Mr. LaRue apologized for his role in the cover-up, saying, "To the extent my activities contributed to the whole tragedy known as Watergate, I am truly sorry."

Sirica Notes Disparities

He said, though, that he thought he had contributed to getting out the "truth" about Watergate through his cooperation with the prosecution. His lawyer, Fred M. Vinson, Jr., argued that Mr. LaRue should not be jailed for a variety of reasons, including his cooperation and the fact that he had been the first to "step forward" and plead guilty.

Judge Sirica replied that he remembered well Mr. LaRue's testimony at the cover-up trial and that he was taking into account such things as the defendant's cooperation.

But, he had to keep in mind constantly, he said, the other sentences he had imposed in the case, particularly on the others who had pleaded guilty and cooperated. One of the

biggest problems of the judiciary, he went on, is disparity in sentencing.

He thereupon sentenced Mr. LaRue to a term of one to three years. He said that after the defendant serves six months, the remainder of the term will be suspended and Mr. LaRue will be placed on unsupervised probation. 2725

He ordered the former Nixon campaign official to report to the Federal authorities at 10 A.M., April 1, to begin his term.

McCord Loses Plea

Later this morning, Judge Sirica denied a motion for a new trial by James W. McCord Jr., one of the Watergate burglars. As a result, Mr. McCord must begin on Friday his one-to-five-year prison term, imposed a year ago but delayed pending his attempts to overturn it on appeal. 21712

One of the central elements of the Watergate cover-up, according to the prosecution's view of the case, was that the various conspirators sought to keep secret the true facts of the Watergate break-in—particularly the campaign committee's connection to it—through such means as payments of "hush money" to the various Watergate burglars.

Mr. LaRue, by his own account, funneled thousands of dollars in \$100 bills to the burglars.

Once a wealthy Mississippi oilman, Mr. LaRue was a high official of the 1972 Nixon campaign apparatus, serving at the Committee for the Re-election of the President as a key aide to former Attorney General John N. Mitchell. For a time Mr. Mitchell was the director of the campaign effort. He was one of the four men convicted at the Watergate cover-up trial on New Year's Day.

Mr. LaRue became friendly with Mr. Mitchell during the 1968 campaign and worked with him on the so-called "Southern strategy" of winning the conservative vote in the South away from the Democrats.

During Mr. Nixon's first term in office, Mr. LaRue was considered a somewhat mysterious figure in the Nixon power structure. He had a White House pass but no title or salary.

First to Be Charged

On June 27, 1973, after the special Watergate prosecution had taken over the investigation of the Watergate affair from the original Federal prosecutors handling the case, Mr. LaRue became the first person to be officially charged in the cover-up of events following the break-in at Democratic national headquarters in the Watergate complex.

He pleaded guilty before

Judge Sirica under an arrangement with the special prosecution, in which he agreed to plead guilty to a single count of conspiracy to obstruct justice—punishable by a maximum of five years in prison—and to give "complete cooperation" to the Government, including "full and truthful disclosure of all information in his possession."

In return, the Government agreed that the plea would dispose of all other potential liability relating to the Watergate cover-up and to campaign financing laws.

Judge Sirica delayed sentencing at the time pending disposition of the other indictments that the prosecution indicated were to follow.

In subsequent months, 10 other persons were charged with offenses stemming from events following the break-in, and seven were convicted. Mr. LaRue contributed his testimony to some of the prosecutions.

Each of the persons convicted was sentenced to some prison time, and this was apparently considered by Judge Sirica in determining the sentence for Mr. LaRue.

Those given previous sentences were Jeb Stuart Magruder, John W. Dean 3d, Herbert L. Porter, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Robert C. Mardian and Mr. Mitchell.

Sturgis Freed in Theft Case

MIAMI, March 14 (UPI)—A nine-month jail term imposed on a convicted Watergate burglar, Frank A. Sturgis, on charges of shipping stolen cars to Mexico was set aside today because of his cooperation with Federal narcotic agents.

Instead, a Federal judge ordered Mr. Sturgis placed on probation. Mr. Sturgis's attorney, Ellis Rubin, said after the order by United States District Court Judge Clyde Atkins, "We hope to use this in order to try to convince Judge John Sirica in Washington to set aside the remainder of Sturgis's jail sentence in the Watergate matter."



Associated Press

Frederick C. LaRue



United Press International

James W. McCord Jr. arriving at court. His request for a new trial was denied again.