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Hints of Hughes Ties With Nixon

Allenwood, Pa.

Former CIA agent James W. McCord Jr., beginning a one-to-five-year prison term for his part in the Watergate break-in, said yesterday that "the Howard Hughes connection" to the affair still has not been fully exposed.

McCord, 51, one of the original seven Watergate defendants, was the leader of four other men arrested inside the Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington on June 17, 1972.

At the time, McCord was director of security for the Committee to Re-elect the President.

At a news conference after entering the minimum security prison here, McCord said there are two things that are little known about Watergate:

McCord said one is "the so-called lawyers' conspiracy" in which he claims his attorney was actually working for former Attorney General John Mitchell.

"I think the other, the obvious one, is the Howard Hughes connection," McCord said, adding that former President Nixon's association with Hughes goes back at least 20 years.

McCord said that Hughes' name came up during the Watergate coverup early in 1972 during a discussion involving G. Gordon Liddy, another convicted Watergate figure, over whether to burglarize the office of Hank Greenspun, publisher of the

Las Vegas Sun.

"It since appears that what that was was an effort to assist Howard Hughes to obtain some documents that were in a safe held by this publisher, documents written to Robert Maheu.

"I think it was a direct favor, political favor, being done for Hughes by Nixon and John Mitchell. I think there's very little doubt about it."

Maheu, a former aide to Hughes, won \$2.8 million in damages from Hughes in December as part of a defamation suit.

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