

Defendants Urged To Admit Bugging

Washington

Four Watergate case defendants are being urged to cut their trial short and plead guilty, by a group which promises to pay each of them \$1000 for every month spent in jail, plus a lump sum when they are released.

Sources close to the defendants identified the group only as "friends from Miami," including a prominent figure in the Bay of Pigs invasion. These "friends" have made their offer this week in private meetings with the defendants.

The four defendants in question have been identified by the sources as Bernard L. Barker, Eugenio Martinez, Frank Sturgis and Virgilio Gonzales. All are from Miami, and worked with the Central Intelligence Agency on the Bay of Pigs invasion.

The attorney for these defendants, Henry Rothblatt, is said to be strongly urging his clients to reject the offer and continue to stand trial. Rothblatt is said to have told his clients that if they decide to enter guilty pleas, they

first will have to fire him as their counsel.

In making the offer, the Miami group apparently hopes to end the trial before information is brought out in the federal court proceedings which might endanger their undisclosed interests.

While the offer has created divisions among the defendants, sources said that so far the four men have not decided whether to plead guilty.

Another of the defendants — G. Gordon Liddy, a former member of President Nixon's White House staff and his campaign committee — was said as of last night to be "standing firm" in his desire to insist on his innocence and stand trial.

The remaining defendant, James W. McCord, former security chief of the Nixon Campaign Committee, so far has given no indication of changing his plea of innocent.

So far only one of the Watergate defendants, former White House consultant E. Howard Hunt Jr., has pleaded guilty to charges against him in the case.

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