

Helms Says Barker Fired for Gambling

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The Central Intelligence Agency fired convicted water-gate Burglar Bernard L. Barker in the mid-1960s because he was involved with "gambling and criminal elements," according to former CIA director Richard Helms.

Barker is the man who worked for E. Howard Hunt Jr. during the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. In the spring of 1971 he recruited, at Hunt's request, the burglary team that broke into the Los Angeles office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist and subsequently was caught in the 1972 Watergate break-in.

Barker and five others were indicted Thursday for allegedly conspiring to violate the civil rights of Dr. Lewis Fielding, Ellsberg's psychiatrist. He has served a year in jail after pleading guilty in the June, 1972, break-in of Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex.

Helms' testimony, given to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee behind closed doors on Feb. 7, 1973, was made public yesterday. The hearings were held on the nomination of Helms to be Ambassador to Iran.

Barker's attorney, Daniel F. Schultz, promptly denied Helms' description of why Barker was terminated by the CIA.

"Mr. Helms' testimony is inconsistent with official information we have received from the CIA. It is categorically denied by Mr. Barker and is simply not true," Schultz said.

Helms' statement on Barker appeared to conflict with Barker's account of his relations with the CIA given in sworn testimony before the Senate Watergate committee May 24, 1973, 3½ months after Helms testified at the Foreign Relations Committee.

Helms told the committee about Barker:

"During the Bay of Pigs he was one of the Cuban derivatives who was involved in that operation and it is my recollection that all lines with him on the part of the agency were eliminated some time in the middle '60s.

Barker, testifying to the Watergate committee, said he

left the CIA immediately after the end of the Bay of Pigs operation in April, 1961, and had no further connection with it until Hunt approached him 10 years later to set up the burglary team.

CIA spokesmen said it would be "difficult" to find out exactly when Barker left the agency or the circumstances.