

Text of McCord Memo Charging Plot to

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WASHINGTON, May 8—
Following is the text of a memorandum submitted yesterday by James W. McCord Jr. to the Senate Watergate investigating committee and Federal prosecutors in the case:

Subject: Pressure on the defendants to blame the Watergate operation on C.I.A.;

I have previously referred to political pressure which was applied to the seven Watergate defendants.

One area of pressure which was applied was that of December, 1972, in which intense pressure was applied on some of the defendants to falsely claim for purposes of a defense during the trial in January, 1973, that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation. This would have had the effect of clearing the Committee for the Re-election of the President and the White House of responsibility for the operation.

In two separate meetings in December, 1972, it was suggested that I use as my defense during the trial the false story that the operation was a C.I.A. operation. I refused to do so.

Cuban Money Charged

I was subsequently informed by Bernard Barker just before the trial began in January, 1973, that E. Howard Hunt and other unnamed persons in Miami had brought intense pressure to bear against the Cuban-Americans who were defendants to use the same story as their defense, that my stand taken against it had been the decisive factor causing this ploy to be dropped, and that Hunt was very bitter about it. Hunt's bitterness was later revealed early in the trial when the Cubans advised that Hunt had said that I "was responsible for our being in the plight we were in for not going along with the C.I.A. thing."

At a later time, I heard from Barker that he had been told that Cuban money was

suspected of being funneled into the McGovern campaign. I have no knowledge that this suspicion was ever verified.

The two December, 1972, meetings with me were on December 21, 1972 and on December 26, 1972. Present at the first meeting with me at the Monocle Restaurant in Washington, D.C., were Gerald Alch and Bernard Shankman, my attorneys. Present at the second meeting was Gerald Alch, and the meeting was at his offices in Boston, Mass.

In the first meeting, Alch stated that he had just come from a meeting with William O. Bittman, attorney for E. Howard Hunt, and I received the impression in the discussion that followed that Alch was conveying an idea of request from Bittman. There followed a suggestion from Alch that I use as my defense during the trial the story that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation.

I heard him out on the suggestion, which included questions as to whether I could ostensibly have been recalled from retirement from C.I.A. to participate in the operation. He said that if so, my personnel records at C.I.A. could be doctored to reflect such a recall. He stated that Schlesinger, the new director of C.I.A. whose appointment had just been announced, "could be subpoenaed and would go along with it."

Support for Gray Cited

I had noted in the newspapers of that day, Dec. 21, 1972, that it had been announced by the White House that Schlesinger would take over as director of C.I.A., and that it had been decided that Pat Gray would be supported by the White House to be permanent director of the F.B.I.

Alch went on to mention testimony, or a statement, made to Federal authorities by Gary Bittenbender, a metropolitan police department undercover police officer, whom I had seen at the

courthouse on June 17, 1972, when the five of us who were arrested were arraigned, in which Bittenbender, purportedly claimed that I had told him that day that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation. I advised Alch that if Bittenbender had made such a statement under oath that he had perjured himself, and that I had not made such a claim.

Bittenbender can be interviewed to determine the circumstances under which he had made such a statement, and whether his statement was in fact an honest error of impressions based on events which occurred in court on that day, which could have misled him. Those were that some of us were identified in the hearing in court as formerly connected with C.I.A.

Alch went on to mention the name of Victor Marchetti whom he was considering calling to describe C.I.A. training in which its employees were trained to deny C.I.A. sponsorship of an operation if anything went wrong and its participants were arrested. He also requested that I meet with him in Boston on Dec. 26, 1972, which I did. There he opened the discussion by showing me a written statement of an interview with Bittenbender in which Bittenbender claimed that on June 17, 1972, I had told him that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation. I repeated to Alch my earlier statement, that Bittenbender had either perjured himself, or had made a false statement to Federal authorities. I told Alch that I would not use as my defense the story that the operation was a C.I.A. operation because it was not true.

In addition, I told him that even if it meant my freedom, I would not turn on the organization that had employed me for 19 years, and wrongly deal such a damaging blow that it would take years for it to recover from it, and finally that I believed that organization to be one of the finest organizations of any

Blame C.I.A. for Watergate Operation

kind in the world and would not let anyone wrongly lay the operation at the feet of C.I.A.

Suspected White House

By now, I was completely convinced that the White House was behind the idea and ploy which had been presented, and that the White House was turning ruthless, and would do whatever was politically expedient at any one particular point in time to accomplish its own ends.

In addition, I earlier had determined to tell the true story of the Watergate operation, and it was now only a matter of a propitious time to do so.

On Friday, Dec. 29, 1972, I visited Bernard Shankman's office in Washington, D. C., and let him read a statement which I had prepared, which I proposed to read to the press on Dec. 30, 1972, releasing Alch as my attorney. I believed that although Shankman had been present at the first meeting he was not a party to the events previously described. Shankman suggested that I give Alch an opportunity to meet with me and explain why he had undertaken the course which he had, and such a meeting was set up for Tuesday, Jan. 2, 1973 in Washington.

Dismissal of Helms

Alch failed to appear, and I delivered a letter to Judge Sirica, releasing Alch as my attorney. Alch immediately called, asked to meet with me on Jan. 3, 1973, and asked to continue as my attorney. We met and Alch stated that he, in conveying the request made of me on Dec. 21 and Dec. 26, 1972, was acting out of what he felt to be was my own best interests. By this time, I was convinced that the ploy to lay the operation at C.I.A.'s doorstep had been headed off, and agreed to give him a second chance.

By this time, I was also convinced that the White House had fired Helms in order to put its own man in control at C.I.A., but as well to lay the foundation for

claiming that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation, and now to be able to claim that "Helms had been fired for it." There had been indications as early as July that the Committee for the Re-election of the President was claiming that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation.

Mrs. Hunt had told me in late July, 1972, that Paul O'Brien had told Howard Hunt in July that the Committee to Re-elect the President had originally informed him that the Watergate operation was a C.I.A. operation. Mrs. Hunt said that her husband had denied to O'Brien that it was a C.I.A. operation. By early December, 1972, it appeared that the White House was beginning to make its move. The events of Dec. 21 and Dec. 26, 1972, only confirmed this in my mind.

Further, based on an earlier discussion with Robert Mardian in May, 1972, it appeared to me that the White House had for some time been trying to get political control over the C.I.A. assessments and estimates, in order to make them conform to "White House policy." One of the things this meant to me was that this could mean that C.I.A. estimates and assessments could then be forced to accord with D.O.D. [Department of Defense] estimates of future U.S. weapons and hardware needs. This could be done by either shifting an intelligence function to D.O.D. from C.I.A., or by gaining complete political control over it at C.I.A.

Among other things, this also smacked of the situation which Hitler's intelligence chiefs found themselves in, in the 1930's and 1940's, when they were put in the position of having to tell him what they thought he wanted to hear about foreign military capabilities and intentions, instead of what they really believed, which ultimately was one of the things which led to Nazi Germany's downfall.

When linked with what I saw happening to the F.B.I. under Pat Gray — political control by the White House — it appeared then that the two Government agencies which should be able to prepare their reports, and to conduct their business, with complete integrity and honesty, in the national interest, were no longer going to be able to do so. That the nation was in serious trouble, has since been confirmed by what happened in the case of Gray's leadership of the F.B.I.

E. Howard Hunt has additional information relevant to the above. Hunt stated to me on more than one occasion in the latter part of 1972, that he, Hunt, had information in his possession which "would be sufficient to impeach the President."

3-Page Hunt Letter Alleged

In addition, Mrs. E. Howard Hunt, on or about Nov. 30, 1972, in a personal conversation with me, stated that E. Howard Hunt had just recently dictated a 3-page letter which Hunt's attorney, William O. Bittman, had read to Kenneth Parkinson, the attorney for the Committee to Re-elect the President, in which letter, Hunt purportedly threatened "to blow the White House out of the water." Mrs. Hunt at this point in her conversation with me, also repeated the statement which she, too, had made before, which was that E. Howard Hunt had information which could impeach the President.

I regret that this memorandum has taken this length to set forth. In view of the nature of the information which I had to furnish, however, it appeared that there was no other way to adequately set this material forth, and to do so in the proper context, without deleting material highly relevant to the events being reported. I shall be glad to appear and answer questions under oath on the material which appears in this memorandum.