

Hunt, Barker

Ordered

Released

Washington

The U.S. Court of Appeals yesterday ordered the release of Watergate conspirators E. Howard Hunt and Bernard L. Barker while their appeals are being considered.

The court held in abeyance the release of three other conspirators, Eugenio R. Martinez, Frank A. Sturgis and Virgilio R. Gonzalez, noting that the parole board has scheduled hearings in their case on January 7.

Hunt, 54, was sentenced November 9 to serve from 2½ to eight years in prison.

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He had pleaded guilty last January to six counts of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping.

Barker was sentenced to a term of 18 months to eight years the same day on his guilty plea to seven counts.

The order by the appeals court specified that the two men be released on their own recognizance.

Martinez, Sturgis and Gonzalez are serving terms of one to five years each. They have been in jail for more than a year and are eligible for immediate parole.

Hunt, a former CIA agent, recruited Barker for the two 1972 break-ins at Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate Office Building. Barker, in turn, enlisted Martinez, Sturgis and Gonzalez.

Police surprised Barker, Martinez, Sturgis, Gonzalez along with James W. McCord Jr., inside the party offices early in the morning of June 17. Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, described as the ringleader, surrendered later.

All but McCord and Liddy pleaded guilty. They later tried to change the plea but were turned down by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

McCord, convicted by a jury, was released pending appeal, after Sirica sentenced him to one to five years.

Liddy, also convicted, is serving a contempt sentence for refusing to testify before a grand jury under immunity and a six to 20-year term for conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping.

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