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A Prison Date For Mitchell, Haldeman

Washington

Convicted Watergate conspirators H.R. Haldeman and John Mitchell will begin serving prison terms June 22 for their role in covering up one of the nation's worst political scandals, Judge John Sirica announced yesterday.

Sirica, the District Court judge who presided at the Watergate coverup trial and handed down the sentences of 30 months to eight years for each man, made the announcement at an informal court session.

He said he would make the surrender date official when he receives the Supreme Court's order refusing to review the coverup convictions of Haldeman, Mitchell and their former colleague John Ehrlichman, who already is serving his sentence.

"The 22nd of June sounds about right to me," Sirica said — setting a date five years and five days after the burglary of Democratic National Committee head-

quarters in the Watergate by operatives of Nixon's re-election campaign.

He said the three-week delay will allow Haldeman to attend his daughter's graduation from law school in Los Angeles June 19, and give lawyers for both men a chance to ask the Supreme Court to reconsider its rejection of their appeal — something the justices almost never do.

It also will give Haldeman and Mitchell the opportunity to put their personal affairs in order, the judge said.

Sirica, who handled most of the Watergate criminal cases, has reduced the terms of the Watergate burglars and others he has sentenced. But no mention of such a possibility was made during the session yesterday.

"I expect to handle this like any other criminal case," Sirica said.

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