Excerpts From Interview With Man Who Says He Helped in Bugging of Democrats

Mc Cord gave me a code name, Bill Johnson, and instructed me to investigate antiwar demonstrations that were occurring in Washington about that time. I was supposed to try to learn of any plans of demonstrators to damage Republican headquarters or to disrupt the Republican convention in Miami in August.

On May 24, after about two weeks of covering demonstrations, I visited my home in Hamden. When I returned to Washington the next day, I found Jim McCord in Room 419 surround-
ed by an array of electronic equipment, including walkie-talkies and the debugging case that had been in his office at the re-election committee.

A sophisticated receiving set, which McCord later said was worth approximately $15,000, was in a large blue Samsonite suitcase. There was a portable radio with shortwave band and an array of tape recorders and other pieces of equipment.

McCord said, "I want to show you some of this equipment and how we're going to use it. "You'll be doing some monitoring on this equipment," he said, and proceed-
ed to show me how to operate the monitoring unit.

Tap Put On Phone

Then he took the telephone apart and inserted a tap in it. To test the device, he dialed a local number for a recorded announce-
ment. The tap picked up the message.

McCord pointed across the street to the Watergate and said, "There's a possibility of putting on a microphone and listening in in a few places. I'm going to put some units over there tonight, and you'll be monitoring them." He didn't have to tell me; I knew the Demo-
cratic National Committee offices were in the Watergate.

My involvement with the committee began May 1 when McCord telephoned my home in Hamden, Conn. He had secured a resume I had filed with the society of ex-F.B.I. agents in New York and had reviewed it and several other resumes on file with this society. He felt that because of my age, background and marital status—I am 36 and single—I was best suited for the position.

He said they [the committee] needed someone immediately, so I took a plane to Washington that night and registered at the Roger Smith Hotel where we met the next morning. He emphasized that although the job was temporary, it could be a stepping stone to a permanent position after President Nixon's re-election.

McCord had a block down the street to the re-election committee headquarters at 1701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., a block from the White House, and McCord took me on a tour of committee offices on several floors. As different persons passed, McCord would say things like, "That's so and so, he's in the White House" or, "There's another one who's on loan from the White House."

We went to the office of Fred La Rue to get approval for my employment, and McCord said, "Mr. La Rue is over from the White House. He's John Mitchell's right-hand man."

La Rue was friendly enough, but very businesslike. McCord read some brief data he had jotted down on the back of an envelope: "Al Baldwin, ex-F. B. I. agent, former Marine captain, law degree, taught police science. . . ."

McCord later issued me a loaded .38-caliber police special and said, "You'll wear this." I had no permit or official identification and questioned whether I was authorized to carry it.

Moved To Motel

At McCord's direction, I moved from the Roger Smith Hotel to the Roger Smith Motel across the street from the Watergate. I checked into Room 418, which he had registered under McCord Associates, the name of his security firm.

Never Questioned Orders

I never questioned McCord's orders. I felt he was acting under orders and with full authority. After all, his boss, was John Mitchell, the committee director and former Attorney General of the United States.
had tapped another one they hoped belonged to a staff official close to O'Brien. McCord finally picked up a conversation on one phone on the monitoring unit. At first I thought the phone was used by a man named Spencer, then we decided it was used by a man named Oliver. Finally, we realized it was used by a man named Spencer Oliver, who happened to be coordinator of the State Democratic party chairman.

A number of persons besides Oliver used his phone, too. Over the next three weeks I would monitor approximately 200 telephone conversations. Some dealing with political strategy and others concerning personal matters. There was no set time for monitoring. The Democrats worked weird hours, like on Sundays and some days until 3 or 4 in the morning. And when I was in the room, I was monitoring from the time I got up until I went to bed.

Kept Logs in Duplicate

The first couple of days I monitored it, I wrote a log of every call in and out. But after that McCord brought a typewriter, and I typed the logs from my notes. I kept them in duplicate and gave both copies to McCord.

McCord would come by once or twice a day to pick up the logs. Sometimes the logs would be only a page or two long, but on a busy day they might run six pages.

When something important happened or if I caught McCord's eye, he would quickly sit down and type up a memo from information in the logs. He would start the memo with, "A confidential source reports . . ." A few days after the monitoring began, McCord instructed me to find another room that would give us a better view of the Democratic offices and perhaps help us establish contact with the tap there that we had been unable to monitor. I checked us in to Room 723 with a view directly across from the Democratic offices.

About June 6, McCord left for Miami, advising that he would be gone only a day. The next day he telephoned, however, and said he had been delayed. I replied that I had recorded some important conversations. He did not want to discuss them on the telephone but instructed me to deliver my original logs to an official at the President's re-election committee.

Before Liddy left, he reached into his inside coat pocket and withdrew an envelope containing a thick stack of brand new $100 bills. He counted off about 16 or 18 bills and handed them to McCord, who put them in his wallet.

On Friday evening, June 16, McCord displayed a unit that I thought looked like door chimes. He removed the unit's cover, exposing a sophisticated electronic device. Then to test the device he put it next to the television set and turned the set on. The unit picked up the television reception. It was a bug, as opposed to a telephone conversation. McCord said he might have to wait until another night to carry out the mission . . . some guy was still working in the Democratic offices.

Light Goes Off

Suddenly I saw the light in the committee offices go off, and I told McCord, "Hey look, the guy's leaving now.

McCord told the other party that the light had been turned off and they could proceed. Then he handed me the walkie-talkie and said he was going down the street. He said, "If you see anything unusual, in a place, activity, anybody around, you get on this and let us know." He took his wallet, change, car keys and other items from his trouser pockets and dropped them on the floor. He left the room with a raincoat over his arm, and after he left, I noticed that the listening device that looked like door chimes was missing.

I walked out on the balcony and watched him cross Virginia Avenue and step into the Watergate complex. Less than an hour later, the lights on the entire floor above the Democratic Committee offices went on. I picked up the walkie-talkie but didn't remember whether
I identified myself as "Unit 1" or "Base"—but I said, "We've got some activity."

A man whose voice I did not recognize—it was not McCord—responded, "What have you got?"

I mentioned the lights going on, and he replied, "Okay, we know about that; that's the 2 o'clock guard check. Let us know if the lights go on any other place."

My watch indicated it was 2:15. I figured the guard check was late.

A Car Arrives

Not long after that a car parked in front of the Watergate, and three men got out and went inside. I wondered if that meant anything, but I did not use the walkie-talkie at that time.

Suddenly, a few minutes later, the lights went on inside the Democratic offices. I noticed the figures of three men. At least two of them came out on the balcony. They were casually dressed and were carrying flashlights and guns. I could see one man in the office holding a gun in front of him and looking behind desks.

Watching from the balcony outside my room, I grabbed the walkie-talkie and said, "Base to any unit.

A voice came back: "What have you got?"

I said, "Are our people dressed casually or are they in suits?"

An anxious voice asked, "What?" I repeated the question.

"Our people are dressed in suits," the voice said. "Well," I answered, "we've got problems. We've got some people dressed casually, and they've got guns. They're looking around the balcony and everywhere, but they haven't come across our people."

The man on the other end sounded absolutely panic-stricken now and started calling: "Are you reading this? Are you reading this?"

Receiving no reply, he then added: "They don't have the unit on, or it's not turned up. Are you still in the room?"

"I replied, "Right."

He said: "Stay there. I'll be right over."

By now, there was all kinds of police activity—motorcycles and paddywagons driving up, and guys jumping out of patrol cars and running up to the Watergate. Then I saw two men carrying suitcases. I recognized one as Hunt. He glanced up at the balcony where I stood, and then with the other man walked over and entered a car parked in front of the Watergate. The two of them drove away.

"Police Are All Over"

Moments later I was contacted on the walkie-talkie again and told: "We're on the way up. Be there in a minute." I said, "You'd better not park near this building, police are all over the place."

He said, "Okay."

Then I heard a voice from another unit whisper, "They've got us." Then McCord's voice came through: "What are you people? Are you metropolitan police or what?"

Another voice demanded: "What's that?" And then the unit went silent. I tried to renew the contact, but to no avail.

A few minutes later Hunt, wearing a windbreaker, rushed into the room. He was extremely nervous.

"What do you see?" he asked.

I told him I saw McCord and some other man being led away from the Watergate in handcuffs. He walked over, looked down at the scene and then said: "I've got to a call a lawyer."

Picking up the phone, he dialed a local number. "They've had it," he told the party on the other end, adding: "Well, I've got $5,000 in cash with me we can use for bond money."

Hunt, hanging up the phone, turned and asked if I knew where the McCord lived. I said yes, I had been to his house in Rockville. He instructed me to pack all the equipment and take it to McCord's house and asked if I had a place to go.

I said I could go to my home in Connecticut, and he said, "Well, get all this stuff out of here, and you get out of here. Somebody will be in touch with you."

With that, he threw his walkie-talkie on the bed and rushed from the room. "Does that mean I'm out of a job?" I shouted after him. But he disappeared down the hallway without answering.