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Judge Pushes For Answers

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Judge John J. Sirica was asking Bernard L. Barker, a defendant in the Watergate bugging case, about "these \$100 bills that were floating around like coupons," and Barker was saying that he didn't really know where they came from.

"I assume it was in connection . . . to the operation of the Watergate," said Barker, adding that he could not say much else because "I got that money in the mail in a blank envelope."

"Well, I'm sorry, I don't believe you," replied Judge Sirica, who for almost an hour had been fruitlessly seeking to elicit some information about what led Barker and three of his comrades to break into the Watergate on June 17.

The four "men from Miami" as they have repeatedly been referred to in the Watergate trial—Barker, Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez and Virgilio Gonzalez—were not under oath as the judge questioned them.

They had been called to the bench by Sirica, who asked assurance that their desire to plead guilty to all the charges against them and march off to prison for up to 55 years was entirely their own.

See SIRICA, A7, Col. 1

SIRICA, From A1

Their heads bobbed up and down in unison as they told the judge that their decisions were uncoerced, then nodded vigorously back and forth amid a chorus of "No, your honor" as Sirica asked if anyone had made suggestions about "executive clemency . . . or commutation of sentence."

On this, the sixth day of the Watergate trial, morning newspapers had quoted sources "close to the defendants" and "close to the case" as variously saying that the Miami men were under "great pressure" to plead guilty and had "been urged by former White House aide E. Howard Hunt Jr. to follow his lead and plead guilty." Over the weekend, there were other newspaper and magazine reports that the four still were being

paid.

As they stood in front of the judge—with Barker, the apparent leader among the four at parade rest and his three codefendants at attention—they told the judge they did not know anything about such matters.

Sirica—noted for his stern, no-nonsense courtroom demeanor and strict sentencing—then began asking the kind of questions he has said he wants answered in this trial:

"For what purpose did you four men go into the Watergate?" he asked. "Who hired you? . . . If there are other people—that is, higher-ups in the Republican Party, the Democratic Party or any other party—I want to know it. What was the motive? Where did this money come from? who was the money man?"

The interrogation began with Martinez, who works as a real estate salesman for Barker in Miami. When a clerk handed Martinez the microphone in the big ceremonial courtroom, the pa-

rade rest that had been maintained by his boss disintegrated and Barker began wringing his hands behind his back and bouncing up and down on his toes.

"I want you to start from the beginning and tell me how you got into the conspiracy," Judge Sirica demanded of Martinez. ". . . I don't care who (the answers) might help or hurt. . . . Don't pull any punches."

"I believe the facts charged in the indictment are true," was Martinez' response.

"That's a blanket statement," noted the judge and asked Martinez pointedly how he was recruited for the Watergate operation. "Maybe I offered myself," the defendant suggested.

When the judge attempted to find out if Martinez had ever done work for the CIA, as news reports have said about all of the Miami men, Martinez answered, "Not that I know of." Among those who

laughed at the answer was a codefendant, G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House aide, and Nixon campaign official who ended a brief nap at the defense table when Sirica started asking about the origins of the conspiracy.

Was he paid? the judge asked Martinez. "I did not get paid for my services" except for expense money

from Barker, he answered. "Money, it doesn't mean a thing," added Martinez. "I owned a hotel, a furniture factory in Cuba. I lost everything."

Frank Sturgis, the Norfolk-born soldier of fortune who wants to write a book about the activities of the Miami men, was equally emphatic in dismissing money as a motive. "When it comes to Cuba and the communist conspiracy involving the United States," he told Sirica, "I will do anything to protect this country."

The only connection between the Watergate bug-

ging and Cuba that the judge was able to elicit, was a statement from Barker that E. Howard Hunt had intimated that whatever they were doing inside Democratic headquarters would somehow liberate the Caribbean island.

"Sir, I have had the privilege and honor of knowing Mr. Hunt for some time," Barker said by way of answering why he was making phone calls to Hunt in the White House long before April 17—when the government says the conspiracy began.

Were any other "higher-ups" involved, Barker was asked. "I was working with Mr. Hunt. I was completely identified with Mr. Hunt. I had the greatest honor . . . (in working) with Mr. Hunt as my superior," he said.



Arriving at court yesterday, from left, Eugenio R. Martinez, lawyer Henry Rothblatt, Frank Sturgis and Bernard L. Barker and Virgilio R. Gonzales.

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