



William F. Buckley Jr. interviewed E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Mario Lazo

# Guilty Buggers Lauded

By Carolyn Anspacher

The seven men involved in the Watergate bugging episode were emotionally extolled yesterday as "men of honor — patriots, who should be decorated," and one of them, E. Howard Hunt Jr., was described as "one of the greatest men of our time."

The accolade came from Mario Lazo, an exiled Cuban lawyer now living in Connecticut, who appeared with Hunt on William F. Buckley Jr.'s "Firing Line" to be heard at 10 p.m. Sunday on KQED, Channel 9.

Yesterday's midday taping of the program found Hunt precluded by his attorneys from discussing any as-

pect of the Watergate case and a panel of Mills College students forbidden to ask any questions of Buckley's guests.

Hunt, a former White House consultant and 21-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency, has pleaded guilty to six counts of conspiracy, breaking into Democratic headquarters and monitoring private telephone conversations.

Four others followed suit — Frank Sturgis, Bernard L. Barker, Eugenio Martinez and Virgilio Gonzales. Trial of two remaining defendants, James W. McCord Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, is under way in Washington.

Hunt, a close friend of Buckley, maintained a tidy

silence about the Watergate adventure, but like Lazo declared its roots lie deep in the Cuban Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Lazo's thesis was a simple one: There was great fear among anti-Castroites that if Senator George McGovern were elected president he would grant diplomatic recognition to Cuba.

Castro, Lazo declared, is on his last legs and his only hope of survival is to gain U.S. recognition, and with it, desperately needed supplies.

"There were many reports, but no proof, that a lot of Communist money was going into McGovern's campaign," Lazo said. "So the

group conducted a honorable, patriotic operation to get that information."

The money financing the Watergate bugging, Lazo said "could have come" from the 650,000 Cuban exiles in this country.

Lazo would not have it that the Watergate bugging contravened American law, and Hunt seemed satisfied to reiterate that he had pleaded guilty.

Hunt, onetime war correspondent and author of 42 books, contented himself with a historical overview of the CIA's involvement in the Bay of Pigs disaster.

He did not appear for an interview after the taping.