

# Backing for McCord on Watergate

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Washington

Former White House consultant E. Howard Hunt Jr., in secret grand jury testimony last week, provided partial support for fellow conspirator James W. McCord Jr.'s claim that higher administration officials knew of the Watergate bugging, the Los Angeles Times learned yesterday.

Hunt, testifying under a grant of immunity from further prosecution, did not, however, give the jury any names, a source said.

Hunt said G. Gordon Liddy, whom the Government has called the Watergate "arch-conspirator," described persons behind the plot as "my principals." But Liddy never named them, according to Hunt's testimony.

Hunt's statements under oath, while providing some support for McCord's claims, also differed from them in some respects.

For one thing, in closed-door Senate testimony last week, McCord said Liddy told him that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, White House counsel John W. Dean III and former presidential aide Jeb Stuart Magruder approved the bugging of the Democratic headquarters, according to sources familiar with his testimony.

But the Times was told Hunt did not mention these names in his testimony.

## MEETING

McCord testified that Hunt had indicated he knew independently about a February, 1972, meeting in Mitchell's office where, according to

McCord, Liddy claimed plans were discussed for bugging Democratic presidential contenders and photographing documents in their offices.

Mitchell, Dean and Magruder have denied any involvement in or prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in.

There were these related developments yesterday:

- United States District Judge John J. Sirica sentenced Liddy, former White

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House lawyer and finance counsel for President Nixon's re-election campaign, to at least eight more months in prison for refusing to cooperate with the grand jury after being given immunity from further prosecution.

Among more than 30 questions Liddy refused to answer were whether others were involved besides the seven convicted defendants, and whether any threats or promises were made to him about testifying.

Liddy was also asked these questions, and declined to answer on the ground it might tend to incriminate him:

"Did you learn from any source what the purposes were of the (Watergate) venture?"

"Did anyone come to you, whether it be Mr. Hunt or anyone else, to seek your advice with respect to the events of June 16 (date of the break-in)?"

Sirica, who previously had sentenced Liddy to a minimum of six years and eight months imprisonment for his part in the conspiracy, bugging and burglary, said the purpose of the new sentence was to compel him to testify.

Although Liddy must serve the contempt sentence first, he can terminate it at any point by agreeing to cooperate with the grand jury. This sentence runs for at least the eight months remaining in the term of the Watergate grand jury, but may last as long as 18 months if the jury's term is extended.

Sirica ordered Liddy to serve the contempt sentence in the overcrowded, antiquated District of Columbia jail, rather than the less severe surrounding of the Danbury, Conn., Correctional Institution where Liddy was originally confined.

- Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.), chairman of the special Senate committee probing the Watergate affair, announced cancellation of a closed-door hearing today at which more testimony from McCord was to have been received. Ervin said too many leaks had occurred from a previous closed session, and that efforts would be made to arrange public testimony by McCord in about 10 days.

- Senator Lowell P. Weicher Jr. (Rep-Conn.), a member of the Watergate committee, called on H. R. (Bob) Haldeman to resign as White House chief of staff. He said Haldeman "was responsible for the personnel and policies" of the Nixon campaign organization.