

M'CORD REPORTED LINKING PAYOFFS TO A G.O.P. LAWYER

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Says He Believes Parkinson Sent Cash for Silencing Bugging Defendants

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WASHINGTON, April 8 —

James W. McCord Jr. has told a Federal grand jury that he believes that Kenneth W. Parkinson, an attorney for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, channeled cash payments to the Watergate defendants in return for silence after their arrest inside Democratic headquarters last June 17, sources close to the case said today.

The sources said that McCord, one of seven men sentenced to prison for their role in the break-in, further testified that he believed that Mr. Parkinson was responsible for "applying the pressure" on the defendants to plead guilty shortly before the trial began in January. Five of the seven did so plead and the two others were convicted.

McCord subsequently confirmed his testimony in a telephone interview with The New York Times, but refused to provide further details.

Some Hearsay Evidence

The sources noted, however, that McCord had based much of his grand jury testimony on hearsay evidence. For example, they said, he acknowledged that his basic information about Mr. Parkinson's alleged role in funneling money and advice to the men had been told to him by Mrs. Dorothy Hunt, the deceased wife of a convicted Watergate participant, E. Howard Hunt Jr. He named Mrs. Hunt as the conduit for the money.

Today's disclosure marked the first time that the name of Mr. Parkinson or that of any member or employe of the Republican re-election committee had been linked to the cash payments made to the Watergate defendants after their arrest, although the existence of such payments was reported

three months ago.

Mr. Parkinson, a member of the Washington law firm of Jackson, Gray & Laskey, cate-

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gorically denied making any cash payments to Mrs. Hunt.

"That's absolutely false," he said, during a telephone interview. "I've never met Mr. Hunt or Mrs. Hunt and I've never met any of the other defendants. I've never handled any money myself."

The lawyer said that he had not been connected with the Republican re-election campaign in any way until a few days after the Watergate break-in, when he was retained to represent the Republicans in a civil lawsuit filed by Lawrence F. O'Brien, then chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Source Unidentified

A number of Justice Department sources, however, confirmed that McCord had named Mr. Parkinson along with other Republican officials in his grand jury testimony. One source, asked about the reported payoffs, said, "I'm not so sure he's wrong."

These sources said the Government was now considering whether the re-election committee might have actively worked to obstruct justice by, in effect, bribing the Watergate defendants.

In January, Frank A. Sturgis, one of the Watergate defendants, said that at least four



United Press International
Kenneth W. Parkinson

of the five Defendants were still being paid, but would not say who was supplying the cash.

According to The Times' sources, McCord testified that Mrs. Hunt had talked to him many times about her role as a delivery woman and often turned to him for advice. She told him that both the money and the pressure to remain silent came from Mr. Parkinson, the sources said.

The sources provided this further account of McCord's grand jury testimony:

On occasion, Mrs. Hunt had flown cash—always in \$100 bills—down to Sturgis and the other Watergate principals in the Miami area. At the time of her death last Dec. 8 in the crash of a commercial plane flying from Washington to Chicago, she was carrying \$10,000 in cash belonging to her husband and planned to invest it in a motel somewhere in the Chicago area.

McCord also testified that he had last talked to Mrs.

Hunt within a week of her death, when she expressed unhappiness about her role as a delivery woman and wondered "what the hell she should do."

A Sense of Loyalty

Another source, who has heard the full McCord account, said that Mrs. Hunt had apparently acted as a delivery woman "out of a sense of loyalty to her husband and got increasingly doubtful about it."

This source, who is not a Government official, said that the payments—at one time reported to be \$1,000 a month to the four defendants living in the Miami area—were meant to "keep them quiet."

"What else would they be paying them for?" the source asked rhetorically. "They weren't performing any activities for which they were being paid."

He suggested that the grand jury might now begin asking officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President to report what payments were made to the defendants after June 17 and also inquire for what reason.

"If the Republicans were dealing in cash to pay off people under indictment and keeping no records," the source said, "I think the Government's got an obstruction of justice case right there."

A Justice Department official familiar with all aspects of the continuing grand jury investigation subsequently acknowledged that the Government's inquiry into possible payoffs was "at a fairly early stage."

He added, however, "We would never leave ourselves in a position of relying solely on McCord's testimony. We're trying to verify what he's said."

Mr. Parkinson, a 45-year-old native of Washington, is a 1952 graduate of the George Washington University Law School. In recent years, he has been active in legal aid programs here, serving as vice president and a member of the board of directors of the Legal Aid Society and in similar offices with the Neighborhood Legal Services project.