

## Merry-Go-Round

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# Hunt's Fears in the Watergate Case



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**I**N SECRET TESTIMONY before the grand jury, Watergate defendant James McCord has confided that his co-conspirator, Howard Hunt, last July feared the President's campaign chiefs were abandoning them and wrote a three-page letter demanding "to contact someone in the White House."

Thereafter, money allegedly was delivered to Hunt's attorney, William O. Bittman, for distribution to the defendants. Mrs. Hunt, acting as the courier, arranged to meet McCord at various places and slip him cash payments. McCord testified that he received around \$45,000 after the Watergate break-in for "salary" and legal expenses.

The grand jury is trying to track down who authorized the payments and whether the money was intended to buy the defendants' silence.

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**A**S McCORD related it to the grand jury, he received a phone call around July 20 from Hunt.

"He felt the Committee to Re-elect the President (was) trying to do him in and to do us in for good and to put us away and abandon us . . ."

McCord later learned from Mrs. Hunt that her husband had written a three-page letter which was read to the campaign committee's attorney, Kenneth W. Parkinson.

Not long afterward, Mrs. Hunt called

to arrange the first transfer of funds. "I went over to her car and she gave me an envelope and she said, 'This is the payment for your salary for five months, beginning in July through whatever it is'— I think it was November . . ."

"I asked her if she wanted a receipt and she said, no, it was not necessary . . ." McCord also talked to her about legal fees. "They want to know," she reported back to him later, "if you're going to keep quiet."

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**M**CCORD felt this was merely a maneuver to keep him quiet until the election, so he put off Hunt until November 7. Then he decided "to go ahead and take the legal fee money." But he refused to be bound if the legal fees were offered "as a weapon to keep us from saying anything."

The question came up again at a meeting with Mrs. Hunt on November 30. As McCord interpreted the conversation, "essentially there wasn't going to be any more money unless you fellows agree to plead guilty and take executive clemency at a later time and keep your mouth shut."

He quoted her as saying, "They want to know if more than one year is okay with you . . . staying in jail more than one year, and then executive clemency." McCord turned down the deal, saying he was going to plead guilty and fight the case.

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