

Clemency Report

New Watergate Figure Leaves

Washington

A Treasury Department official went on "administrative leave" yesterday following a published report that he tried to pressure Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. to keep quiet with a promise of executive clemency later.

A department spokesman said the official, John J. Caulfield, 44, asked for and was granted the leave "through normal channels."

Caulfield's action made him at least the 14th government official to step aside after being linked to the Watergate scandal. Most resigned or were fired within the past two weeks.

Caulfield, a 15-year veteran of the New York City police department, spent three years on the White House staff before going to the Treasury a year ago. Since July 1, he has held the title of assistant director for criminal enforcement of the department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau.

The Los Angeles Times reported earlier yesterday that Caulfield held two secret meetings last January with McCord, who was then on trial for conspiracy, burglary, bugging and wire-tapping in the Watergate case.

The Times, quoting "a source involved in the matter," said Caulfield "repeatedly told McCord at these meetings . . . that McCord could expect executive clemency in 10 or 11 months if he remained silent at the trial and accepted imprisonment."

McCord, subsequently convicted, has testified to investigators that he repeatedly spurned similar offers relayed to him by a co-conspirator, E. Howard Hunt Jr.

McCord has testified that Caulfield recruited him to become security chief for President Nixon's reelection campaign.

Caulfield was a key aide

to presidential assistant John D. Ehrlichman and later to White House counsel John W. Dean III, working on law enforcement policy.

The White House announced April 30 that Dean and Ehrlichman had resigned in the widening Watergate scandal.

Dean is reported to have told federal investigators that Hunt's attorney asked about the possibility of executive clemency for his client last December. The report, by Newsweek magazine, said Dean recalled that Ehrlichman discussed the matter with Mr. Nixon and told the lawyer afterward the President would consider it.

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