

His Story
SFChronicle
Stirs Up
Hearing
 MAY 19 1973

Associated Press

Washington

James W. McCord Jr., the convicted Watergate conspirator, said yesterday he received repeated offers of executive clemency from an administration aide and was told President Nixon knew of the offers and would be told of McCord's response.

The White House immediately repeated that the President had authorized clemency for no one connected with the scandal.

McCord's statement sent a ripple of excitement through the large Caucus Room where the Senate special Watergate committee was taking the second day of testimony in televised hearings.

"The President's ability to govern is at stake. Another Teapot Dome scandal is possible and the government may fall," McCord said he was told by John Caulfield, now a Treasury Department official on leave. Until March 1972, Caulfield had been an assistant to ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III.

DATES

The offers by Caulfield and others, McCord said, began in September last year and continued until late January and were aimed at his pleading guilty and remaining silent.

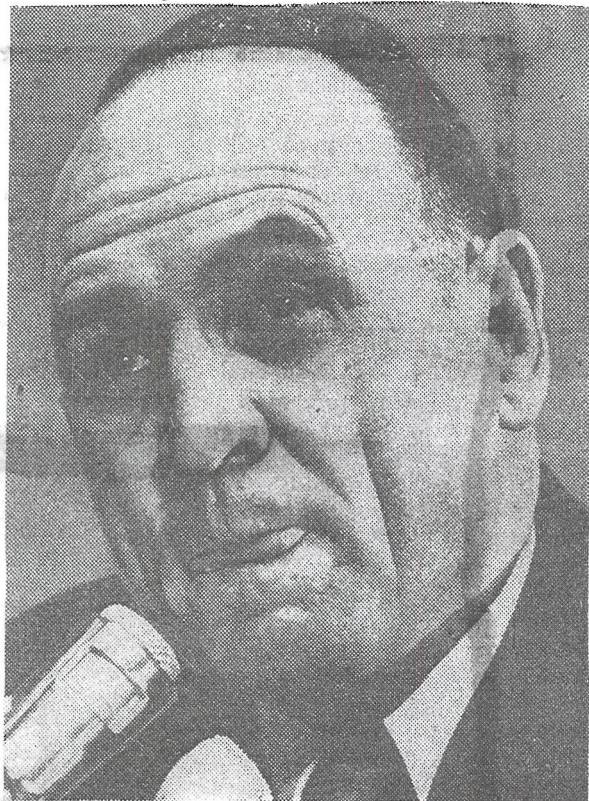
McCord said Caulfield made the offer repeatedly in January of this year when the Watergate trial was under way. McCord was convicted as a conspirator, bur-

See Back Page

From Page 1

glar and wiretapper in the trial; he awaits sentence.

Caulfield issued a state-



UPI Telephoto

WATERGATE CONSPIRATOR JAMES McCORD
'It involved the highest officer in the land'

ment late yesterday saying that while McCord's testimony "does not fully reflect my best recollection of the events which took place between he and I during January of this year, it is true that I met with Mr. McCord on three occasions in January and conveyed to him certain messages from a high White House official."

In his statement, Caulfield did not elaborate, and he declined further comment. He is scheduled to appear before the Senate committee Tuesday when the hearings resume.

BUG

The 49-year-old McCord was arrested inside the party headquarters with four others last year while attempting to see why a bug he had planted earlier wasn't working. At the time, McCord was security chief for the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

It was the first time in public testimony that McCord mentioned the reported clemency offer, although he told committee investigators about it two days ago. Asked why he waited so long, McCord said:

"Because it involved directly, in my opinion, the

President of the United States. It also involved an individual that I considered a personal friend, Mr. Jack Caulfield."

McCord said also it was his personal opinion that "the President of the United States, I felt had set into motion" the Watergate operation. He said he had been reluctant to say that before primarily because "it involved the highest officer in the land, the President of the United States."

In a meeting with Caulfield on January 12, the fourth day of the Watergate trial, McCord said Caulfield told him:

"I may have a message to you at our next meeting from the President himself."

The executive clemency

offer, McCord said, was made two or three times in that same meeting. "I repeated each time that I would not even discuss it, nor discuss pleading guilty."

Sources close to the committee said "Caulfield was Ehrlichman's man," and indicated there is proof the orders regarding executive clemency came from John D. Ehrlichman, who re-

signed April 30 as a top Nixon aide.

However, CBS reported that the executive clemency offers relayed to McCord came from White House counsel Dean.

CAULFIELD

McCord told the senators in the crowded hearing room that he had previously talked of Caulfield's offer only to investigators for the committee. He said he begged the grand jury's indulgence earlier in not revealing the offers because he did not want to involve Caulfield.

Caulfield was instrumental in getting McCord his job as security chief for the Committee for the Re-election of the President in the fall of 1971.

MEETING

At their last meeting of January 25, Caulfield con-

veyed a veiled threat, McCord said.

Reading from a prepared statement "for accuracy's purpose," McCord said he was told by Caulfield:

"You know that if the administration gets its back to the wall, it will have to take steps to defend itself."

"I took that as a personal threat and I told him in response that I had had a good life, that my will was made out and that I had thought through the risks and would take them when I was ready," McCord said.

PRESSURE

McCord said that in addition to pressure from Caulfield, pressure to keep silent and plead guilty came from the following persons:

- E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of McCord's fellow conspirators who pleaded guilty as the January trial began, and Hunt's wife, Dorothy, who was killed in a plane crash in December.

- Gerald Alch, a Boston attorney who served as McCord's counsel during the trial.

- William Q. Bittman, an attorney who represents Hunt.

McCord testified yesterday that after his arrest he

received \$46,000 in cash from Mrs. Hunt, \$25,000 of which was used for attorneys fees. McCord said he thought the funds came from the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

McCord and G. Gordon Liddy, both officials of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, were the only two of the seven defendants indicted in the Watergate break-in who stood trial. The other five pleaded guilty, denying that their plea and their silence had been bought or brought on by pressure.

WITNESS

McCord was the first of a number of key witnesses scheduled to appear before the Senate inquiry. It was in his letter, charging political pressure, perjury and involvement of others that broke open the coverup phase of the affair.

Since the March 19 letter to Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, who has set the sentencing of McCord for June 15, at least a dozen administration officials have resigned or were fired, including Ehrlichman and White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman.

McCord also said:

- He regarded the Watergate bugging as "illegal under normal circumstances" but felt differently when told by fellow conspirator Liddy in February 1972 that then-Attorney General Mitchell and White House counsel Dean approved it.

- He received "almost daily" FBI reports through Justice Department official Robert Mardian in the spring of 1972 on violent demonstrations that might be mounted against Republican campaign speakers.

He said one report included allegations of Democratic financing of a "barnstorming" tour by Vietnam Veterans Against the War.