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McCord's Ex-Lawyer Kept a Low Profile

By John Hanrahan
Washington Post Staff Writer

Gerald Alch, a Boston attorney whose low-key style is in sharp contrast to that of his famous law partner, F. Lee Bailey, is the latest in a growing list of lawyers whose names have been associated with the Watergate affair.

Alch until recently was an attorney for convicted Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. Last week, Alch resigned as McCord's lawyer after a private memo from McCord to the Senate select committee investigating the Watergate affair came to light.

In the memo, McCord said Alch tried to pressure him to say that the Watergate break-in and bugging last year was a CIA operation.

Alch denied this and said he must resign because McCord had smeared his reputation.

Yesterday, before the Senate Committee, the talkative McCord told a nationwide television audience that Alch had been among those who communicated "political pressure" as part of a plan, emanating from the White House to get McCord to remain silent in return for executive clemency at a later date.

Alch was not available to answer these latest charges. All in all, it was a bad day for the firm of Bailey, Alch and Gillis. In addition to Alch's troubles, Bailey was indicted in Florida for mail fraud and conspiracy along with Dare to Be Great promoter Glenn W. Turner.

Earlier this month, Bailey told reporters that McCord

approached him early last fall in order to hire him. Bailey said he declined and referred him to Alch.

Defense sources indicated Alch and McCord had had a sometimes stormy relationship.

McCord announced at one point, shortly before the Watergate trial began Jan. 8, that he was firing Alch, but later the same day agreed to keep him on, sources said.

At the Watergate trial, Alch represented McCord in a generally quiet, low-key fashion. Some Boston lawyers recently told reporters that Alch, in other trials, has been more boisterous — in the style of Bailey.

Associates of Alch said yesterday that his reputation has always been very much in Bailey's shadow. Although known in Boston for his handling of numerous murder and other former capital cases, he has not been prominent on the national scene.

Colleagues credit him with laying much of the groundwork in assisting Bailey with the successful defense of Army Capt. Ernest Medina, who was acquitted of murder charges in connection with the 1968 My Lai massacre.

Alch, 39, has been with the Bailey firm for more than five years. He is married, has five children and lives in Boston. A 1954 graduate of Harvard, he received his law degree from Boston University Law School in 1957.