

Report of McCord Plot To Go Free

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Washington

James W. McCord Jr. sent John J. Caulfield, a former White House aide, an unsigned letter shortly before the Watergate trial warning that if the Nixon administration persisted in an attempt to depict the bugging operations as inspired by the Central Intelligence Agency, he would "bring the house down," sources close to the case said yesterday.

McCord's unsigned letter, which the former CIA security official did not mention during his televised testimony before the Senate Watergate committee last Friday, was mailed in late December.

The sources said that McCord, in an apparent effort to get freed, then made token telephone calls to the Israeli and Chilean embassy in Washington, which he knew from his days as CIA official to be wiretapped by the FBI. They said McCord later demanded that White House officials prevail on federal prosecutors to concede that he had been overheard on an illegal wiretap and dismiss the charges against him.

"He wanted the govern-

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ment to come in and say it had overheard him," one source said. "He told Caulfield that's the way he wanted it done."

Caulfield, a former New York undercover policeman who joined the White House staff in April, 1969, took McCord's demand to John W. Dean III, then the White House counsel, the source said. "Dean wanted to do it that way, too," the source added, "but the FBI conducted a search and couldn't find anything."

During the first weeks of the trial, McCord's attorney Gerald Alch of Boston, made two motions for the disclosure of wiretap information but the federal prosecutors reported that a search of all relevant wiretap logs proved negative.

McCord, who served 19 years with the CIA before joining the President's reelection committee early in 1972 as a security coordinator, will testify again today before the Senate Watergate committee.

INVOLVEMENT

One government source noted that McCord had refused to discuss the involvement of higher-ups during the federal inquiry into the Watergate affair last fall, and continued to do so even when provided with two chances for reduced charges.

This source suggested that McCord's threatening letter to Caulfield may have been a factor behind Caulfield's reported subsequent offer of executive clemency for McCord in exchange for si-

lence. Caulfield also is scheduled to testify before the Senate committee today.

In his testimony Friday, McCord related how Caulfield offered him clemency, financial aid and a job if he continued not to cooperate with the federal prosecutors. McCord said the offer from Caulfield — whom he believed was speaking for Mr. Nixon — was first conveyed during the opening week of the Watergate trial in early January. That would have been about two weeks after McCord's letter was mailed.

LIED

During his testimony, McCord told of eventually refusing Caulfield's offer and said he had repeatedly complained to him that "the government had lied in denying electronic interception of my phone calls from my residence."

McCord added that he had provided Caulfield "with a memorandum on the dates of the two calls of mine in September, 1972, and October, 1972, that I was sure had been intercepted."

McCord, in his Senate testimony, named Alch as among those who had urged him to describe the Watergate bugging as a CIA operation. Alch, the sources said, filed a motion last week seeking to withdraw from the suit.

Intelligence officials confirmed the existence of wiretaps on the Israeli Embassy yesterday. One government source said the top-secret FBI wiretap program was known by the code name "Scope" when it was initiated during the Johnson administration.