

McCord and Caulfield Meet Again

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Washington

James W. McCord Jr. and John W. Caulfield came face to face again yesterday, not at the second scenic overlook of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, but at the center of the Senate investigation of the Watergate conspiracy.

This time, instead of the January night that cloaked their meetings on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River, their encounter was amid the dazzle of television lights. This time there was no handshake. This time they did not exchange a word.

But first McCord, and then Caulfield, told the same essential story to the Senate select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities and their combined effect was to confirm the charge that someone in the White House had tried to mask the extent of political intrigue in the 1972 campaign.

CLEMENCY

McCord sat, impassive, his legs crossed and hands folded in his lap, as Caulfield took his place at the

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witness table in the Caucus Room of the Old Senate Office Building and confirmed the outline of their January meetings to discuss White House clemency in return for McCord's silence.

There were clear differences in the tenor of their separate recollections of clandestine conversations and surepetitious meetings during the period early this year when McCord was on trial for his part in the burglary and bugging of the Democratic party's national headquarters.

But Caulfield described, in a 26-page prepared statement, the same meetings that McCord had discussed last Friday when he read a ten-page summary that electrified the Senate hearings.

McCord had recounted last week a meeting at which he said Caulfield had indicated that President Nixon was aware of the offer of executive clemency. Caulfield insisted yesterday that he had invoked only the authority of "the highest levels of the White House."

ATTRIBUTE

McCord had attributed the coverup to Mr. Nixon, to H. R. Haldeman, then the White House chief of staff, or to John D. Ehrlichman, then the President's principal domestic adviser. Caulfield declared yesterday that the clemency discussion had been initiated by John W. Dean III, the former White House counsel, and added that he could only "guess" it had been authorized by Ehrlichman.

McCord had told of a ride in Caulfield's car during which he had been threatened that the Nixon administration would "have to take steps to defend itself" if he did not follow the "game plan" and remain silent.

Caulfield's statement categorically denied that he had made any threats, but it referred to his "small piece of friendly advice" to McCord that the White House could be "as tough-minded as you and I."

McCord had recalled an apprehensive comment by Caulfield that "the President's ability to govern is at stake" and that the administration could not afford "an-

other Teapot Dome scandal."

Caulfield's recollection was that he had underscored the sincerity of the clemency offer by saying that his White House contacts "were extremely concerned about the Watergate burglary developing into a major scandal affecting the President."

Even taking into account the variances, the effect of the two witnesses was to describe in full public view a web of involvement by the White House in an effort to clamp a tight lid on the Watergate revelations.

The suggestion implicit in the testimony of both witnesses was that the Senate committee would find the ultimate source of the conspiracy somewhere within the executive mansion.

MANNER

Curiously, just as McCord's testimony had seemed all the more credible because of his calm detachment, Caulfield's appearance seemed enhanced by the manner of the professional.

Caulfield read his 26-page statement as though it were a description of the investigation into a robbery ring that earned him detective's rank in the New York City police force in 1955. His grip was rock firm on the glass of ice water that he picked up to sip from occasionally. He read slowly, neatly rearranging the pages as he went from one to the next.

McCord sat three rows behind Caulfield at the center of the Caucus Room, in the seats reserved for witnesses and their lawyers. He had the poker face of the former operative for Central Intelligence. The only time he moved was to pinch the bridge of his nose. Once.

McCord remained in the hearing room until the seven senators recessed briefly for a roll-call vote on the Senate floor. Then, without a glance at Caulfield, he picked up his briefcase and made his way through the milling onlookers and past the live television cameras to an elevator, declining comment. He did not return.

Caulfield remained at the witness table throughout the recess, shaking hands genially with those who approached him.



AP Wirephoto

While John Caulfield read statement, James McCord (right) sat three rows behind him in Senate hearing room