

# McCord Disputed on Idea Of Linking Burglary to CIA

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Two defense lawyers yesterday disputed James W. McCord Jr.'s version of Watergate trial strategy proposals, but they did not fully resolve how the theory that the break-in was a CIA operation first was advanced.

One contended that the defense lawyers simply asked their clients if the CIA was involved and the other said he could not recall whether CIA involvement was first raised as a question by attorneys or proposed as a possible defense before the question was settled.

By bringing the defense team and others into his Senate hearing testimony yesterday, McCord added to the list of those who can confirm or contradict his version of the bugging operation and efforts to cover it up.

Critics of McCord have said for weeks that he was offering hearsay testimony, much of it impossible to confirm because it dealt with the alleged actions of a dead woman, Dorothy Hunt, the wife of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.

But since his first appearance before the Senate Watergate committee last Friday, McCord has introduced the names of other persons who can confirm or dispute various aspects of his testimony. The first of these was John J. (Jack) Caulfield, who testified yesterday. Caulfield confirmed much of what McCord had told the committee earlier, but also disputed some key portions. Caulfield said, for

example, that he didn't recall "saying anything about the President" when he made an offer of executive clemency to McCord.

Also yesterday, McCord said that Gerald Alch, the Boston lawyer who defended him in the Watergate trial, once suggested "that I use as my defense during the trial the story that the Watergate operation was a CIA operation." Alch immediately disputed that.

In a telephone interview yesterday afternoon, Alch said he did not suggest to McCord the CIA defense but "discussed whether or not there was a CIA involvement" after the question was raised at a meeting of Watergate defense lawyers.

Alch said that one of the attorneys representing the seven Watergate defendants raised the question that it might have been a CIA operation in a meeting in the office of William O. Bittman, a Washington lawyer who represented Hunt.

Alch said that he believes the meeting was held on the same day that he discussed it with McCord. He said he cannot remember which lawyer raised the question at the defense strategy session, but said, "We all agreed to ask our clients about it."

McCord testified before the committee that he inferred from Alch's statements that his lawyer was suggesting a defense that was conceived by Bittman.

Bittman said in a telephone interview that "McCord's hearsay testimony about me is total hogwash and he knows it."

Bittman said that Alch's version of the CIA operation story is "absolutely correct," but he said he cannot recall whether a lawyer at the defense strategy meeting asked if the break-in could have been a CIA operation or actually suggested the CIA story as a possible defense.

"It was mentioned as one of the possible things that were discussed in a preliminary way about the coming trial," Bittman said.

McCord said the meeting with Alch took place at the Monocle Restaurant on Capitol Hill and that Bernard Shankman, a lawyer, also was present. Shankman did not reply to requests for comment yesterday.

McCord testified that at the luncheon meeting with Alch and Shankman last Dec. 21, Alch raised the question of "whether I could ostensibly have been recalled from retirement from CIA to participate in the (Watergate) operation."

McCord said that his lawyer suggested that CIA personnel records "could be doctored to reflect such a recall and that James R. Schlesinger, named CIA director on that day," "could be subpoenaed and would go along with it."

Alch said in the interview that "there was no discussion of forging records." He also said in a press conference, I never mentioned to him that I had the corroboration of the director of the CIA who would be willing to work with me in consort and forge documents. Now that to me

is absurd, to me and any rational observer."

In his testimony, McCord did not say how he responded to Alch's alleged defense recommendation. Alch said in the interview that McCord responded with "a tirade about how the administration was out to get the CIA."

Alch said that McCord's answer on the question of a CIA operation at the lunch "was confused." Both men agree that the discussion of a CIA defense was ended at a second meeting between in Alch's Boston office on Dec. 26. McCord testified that he rejected such a defense at that meeting. Alch said his client simply told him then that the CIA was not involved.

McCord testified that Alch mentioned during the Dec. 21 lunch that metropolitan police intelligence Officer Gary Bittenvender had "purportedly claimed" that McCord told him the break-in was a CIA operation.