

'Top Level' Promised Clemency

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John J. Caulfield, self-described former investigator and security expert for the White House, told the Senate select committee on the Watergate yesterday that he offered executive clemency to Watergate conspirator James W. McCord at the direction of White House counsel John W. Dean III.

It was Dean, Caulfield testified, who instructed him to tell McCord that the clemency offer "comes from the very highest levels of the White House."

Caulfield said that he asked Dean, "Do you want me to tell him (McCord) it comes from the President?" Dean replied, according to Caulfield, "No, don't do that. Say that it comes from way at the top."

McCord had told the Senate committee last Friday that Caulfield said to him that the "President of the United States" knew of the meetings in which Caulfield was offering McCord executive clemency in return for McCord's silence. Caulfield testified yesterday, however, that in following Dean's orders he did not recall mentioning the President to McCord.

In his consultations with the White House, according to his testimony yesterday, Caulfield dealt repeatedly and only with Dean about how to handle McCord. "I specifically never spoke to the President of the United States and have no knowledge of my own as to whether he personally had endorsed this offer or indeed whether anyone had ever discussed it with him," Caulfield testified.

Caulfield, a former New York City policeman who worked in the White House for both Dean and former top presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman, also said he had "formed an impression that Mr. Dean rarely made decisions on matters of consequence without speaking

to Mr. Ehrlichman."

Caulfield's testimony, in addition to providing corroboration of McCord's assertion that inducements to remain silent had come from the White House, was the first detailed public account by a participant of Dean's

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role in the cover-up of the Watergate affair.

Caulfield will return today to be questioned by the committee on the specifics of his 26-page prepared statement, which he read yesterday afternoon. Caulfield's account of three meetings and several telephone conversations with McCord differed in some respects from testimony McCord gave to the Senate committee Friday and yesterday morning.

Both men agreed in their testimony that they met three times during the Watergate trial last January, that Caulfield talked to McCord on the telephone several times about the charges against him and that McCord had received an anonymous call at a pay telephone booth urging him to "plead guilty."

Caulfield said he had arranged the phone call, which was made by another former New York policeman—Anthony Ulasewicz—after Dean had given Caulfield the message to convey to McCord: if he should plead guilty, he would receive executive clemency, his family would be "taken off" and he would be rehabilitated.

The testimony of McCord and Caulfield differed on these points:

• McCord said on Friday that Caulfield told him at their first meeting on Jan. 12 that "the President of the United States . . . had been told of the forthcoming meeting with me, and would be immediately told of the results of the meeting." He (Caulfield) further stated that "I may have a message to you at our next meeting from the President himself."

Caulfield told the committee yesterday, "At no time in our first meeting do I recall saying anything about the President but I specifically renewed the offer of executive clemency, as indicated above and referred to it as coming from the 'highest levels of the White House.'"

Caulfield later told the committee, however, that, "I

realized at the time of my first conversation in January that I was involved in questionable activity but I felt that it was important for me to carry this message for the good of the President." Caulfield said that his "impression" was that "I was doing a great service for the President of the United States in a very sensitive matter."

• During the Jan. 14 meeting, McCord testified on Friday, Caulfield made this statement: "You are not following the game plan. Get closer to your attorney. You seem to be pursuing your own course of action. Don't talk if called before the grand jury. Keep silent, and do the same if called before a congressional committee."

Caulfield told the Senate committee yesterday: "At no time on this occasion or on any other occasion do I recall telling Mr. McCord to keep silent if called before the grand jury or any congressional committees."

• McCord said he took as a personal threat a statement he said Caulfield made to him during a meeting on Jan. 25: "You know that if the administration gets its back to the wall," McCord quoted Caulfield as saying, "it will have to take steps to defend itself."

Caulfield said yesterday his recollection is that "I gave him what I considered to be a small piece of friendly advice.

"I said words to the effect that, 'Jim, I have worked with these people and I know them to be as tough-minded as you and I. When

you make your statement don't underestimate them. If I were in your shoes, I would probably be doing the same thing.'"

• McCord told the committee Friday that he was "certain" that at least two telephone calls he made last fall had been tapped by the government. Yesterday, he told the Senate committee he had called the Chilean and Israeli embassies because he "assumed" their phones were tapped by the government. The purpose of these calls, McCord said yesterday, was that they provided "a way of testing the truthfulness of the government." He then asked his lawyer to file a motion requesting the government to produce whatever records it had of intercepted phone calls involving McCord. The government replied at the time that it had no such rec-

ords.

McCord said he picked the two embassies to call "at random" that he identified himself only as a person involved in the Watergate trial without giving his name. He said he spoke briefly about obtaining a visa to visit the two countries.

• Caulfield described McCord's activities concerning the phone calls as a scheme McCord had devised to get the charges against him dismissed.

"It was Mr. McCord's theory," Caulfield told the committee, "that if the government searched its wiretap records, it would find records of these two calls. Meanwhile, Mr. McCord and his attorneys would make a motion in court, aimed at dismissing the case against Mr. McCord because of the use of wiretap evidence by the prosecution. Mr. McCord's idea was that when the U.S. attorney was told that at least two of Mr. McCord's conversations had been intercepted over a national security wiretap, he would be forced to dismiss the case rather than reveal that the two embassies in question were the subject of national security wiretap."

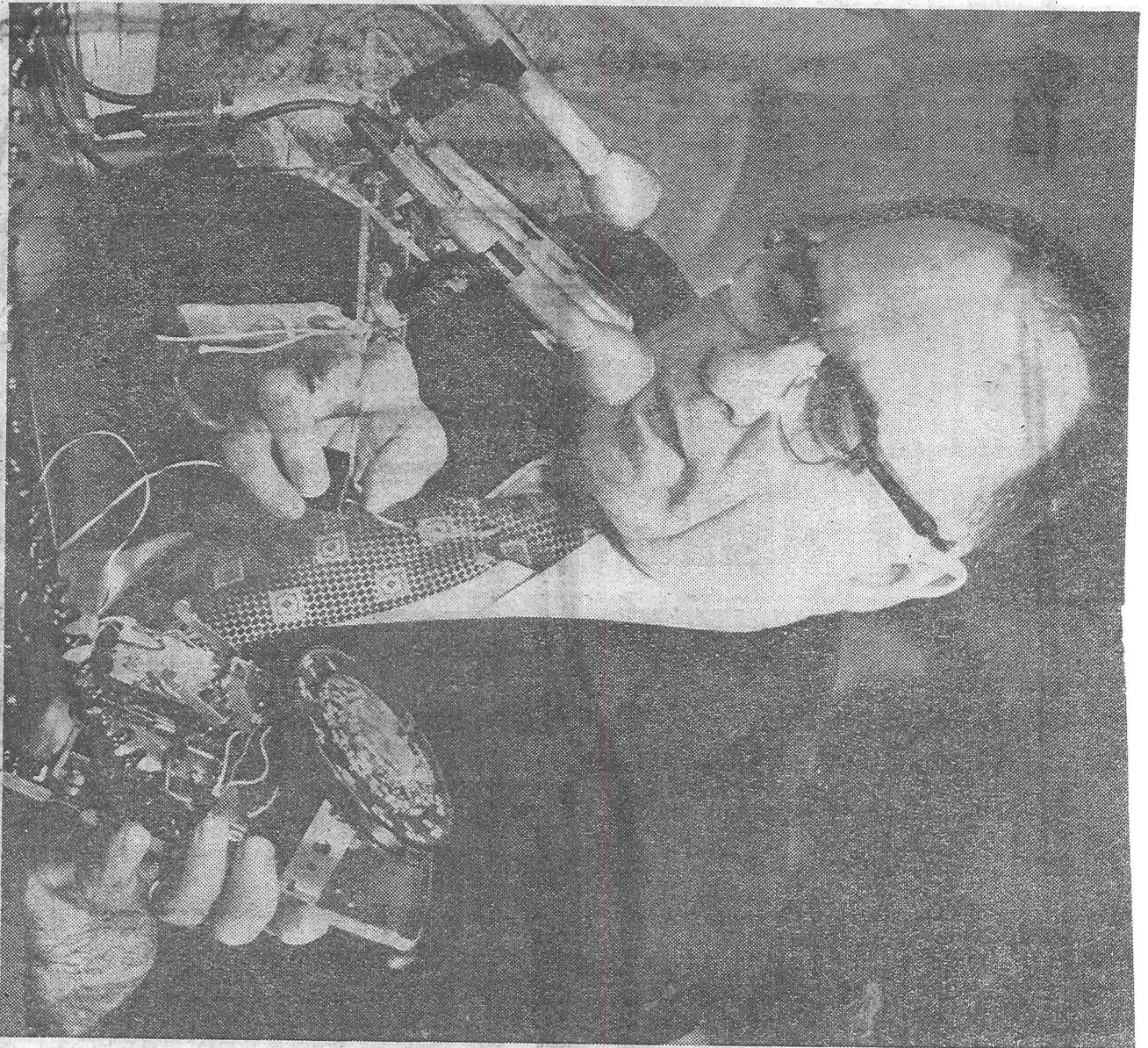
Caulfield said that "in the context of demanding his immediate freedom, he

(McCord) said that he knew of a way in which his freedom could be obtained and asked me if I could convey his plan to the people at the White House with whom I was talking."

• McCord told the committee on Friday that the initiative for the meetings with Caulfield was taken by the White House through Caulfield. McCord said that on the first day of the trial, his lawyer, Gerald Alch, took him to the office of William O. Bittman, the lawyer for Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. After Alch talked with Bittman, McCord said, Alch took him aside "and said that Bittman told him I would be called that same night by a friend I had known from the White House."

McCord disclosed yesterday, in testimony before Caulfield appeared, that he had written Caulfield a letter in December, when McCord said he became concerned that an attempt was being made to blame the Watergate break-in and bugging on the CIA, where McCord worked for 20 years.

McCord said he was reconstructing the letter from



James W. McCord, left, shows how to rig transmitter of bugging device in a telephone and John J. Caulfield



testifies before Senate select committee yesterday.

Photos by Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post



By Ellsworth Davis and Charles Del Vecchio—The Washington Post

Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (left) and Watergate conspirator James W. McCord assume similar poses at hearing.

memory and that it said: "Dear Jack, I am sorry to have to write you this letter. If (then-CIA Director Richard C.) Helms goes and the Watergate operation is laid at CIA's feet where it does not belong, every tree in the forest will fall. It will be a scorched desert. The whole matter is at the precipice right now. Pass the message that if they want it to blow, they are on exactly the right course. I'm sorry that you will get hurt in the fallout."

McCord told the committee that "the letter was unsigned and did not request any message requesting any contact with Caulfield, nor request for the White House to get me off the case. I, in fact, sought no such contact at any time."

"If I had wanted to talk with Caulfield, it would not have been necessary to go through any complicated arrangements and a trip to William Bittman's office, as

occurred on Jan. 8, 1973. I need only have made a phone call to Caulfield's office or home. At no time did I ever initiate any such call to Caulfield," McCord said.

Caulfield's recollection of the contents of the letter to him from McCord was substantially the same as McCord's. Caulfield said he turned the letter over to Fred Fielding, Dean's assistant.

In early January, Caulfield said, he received a call while in San Clemente, Calif., from Dean. Caulfield said Dean told him to call McCord with the message to "plead guilty." Caulfield said he was reluctant to call McCord and it was finally agreed with Dean that Ulasewicz would call.

Both Caulfield and McCord agreed that their relationship was a friendly one, and that they had first met in September, 1971, when Caulfield had interviewed McCord for a job as security consultant to the Republican National Committee. According to Caulfield, at one time he and McCord had discussed going into business together.

McCord read a memorandum yesterday that he had submitted earlier to the committee in which he charged that Alch had outlined a plan to blame the Watergate operation on the CIA.

McCord said that Alch suggested on Dec. 21 and 26, 1972, that McCord base his defense at the trial on the assertion that the CIA

was behind the Watergate affair. "Alch stated that he had just come from a meeting with William O. Bittman . . . and I received the impression in the discussion that followed that Alch was conveying an idea or request from Bittman."

"I heard him out on the suggestion which included questions as to whether I could ostensibly have been recalled from retirement from CIA to participate in the operation. He (Alch) said that if so, my personnel records at CIA could be doctored to reflect such a recall."

"He (Alch) stated that (James) Schlesinger, the new director of CIA, whose appointment had just been announced, 'could be subpoenaed and would go along with it.'"

Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) issued a statement yesterday defending Schlesinger. He said the CIA director, now Defense Secretary-designate, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 11, 1973, "that no one had ever spoken to him on such a subject."

Alch said in a telephone interview yesterday with The Washington Post that 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 also said yesterday he wanted to tell his side of the story to the Senate committee today.

Bittman said in a telephone interview yesterday that "McCord's hearsay testimony about me is total hogwash and he knows it." Bittman said Alch's version of the CIA operation story is "absolutely correct," but he said he cannot recall whether an attorney 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.

McCord also read a statement to the committee outlining what he said was his knowledge about an alleged plot to crack open the safe of Las Vegas Sun publisher Hank Greenspun.

McCord said he was told by convicted Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy "that Attorney General John Mitchell has told him that Greenspun had in his possession blackmail type information involving a Demo-

cratic candidate for President, that Mitchell wanted that material, and Liddy said that this information was in some way racketeer-related, indicating that if this candidate became President, the racketeers or national crime syndicate could have a control or influence over him as President."

Liddy, McCord said, told him in February, 1972, that he was going to Las Vegas, to look over Greenspun's office.

In April or May, 1972, McCord said, "Liddy told me that he had again been to Las Vegas for another casing of Greenspun's offices. Liddy said that there were then plans for an entry operation to get into Greenspun's safe. He went on to say that after the entry team finished its work, they would go directly to an airport near Las Vegas where a Howard Hughes plane would be standing by to fly the team directly into a Central American country so that the team would be out of the country before the break-in was discovered."

"Around the same time Liddy made this last statement to me about the Howard Hughes plane, Hunt told me in his office one day that he was in touch with the Howard Hughes company and that they might be needing my security services after the election," McCord said.

"My inclination at this point in time is to disbelieve the allegation against the Democratic candidate referred to above, and to believe that there was in reality some other motive for wanting to get into Greenspun's safe," McCord said.

Greenspun told a news conference in Las Vegas that Liddy may have been after his files on Hughes. "I don't think they were as much interested in the information we had on this Democratic candidate as they were in the Hughes documents," Greenspun said. "It's very possible that they were anxious to recover those documents." Greenspun did not say what the documents were or why they would be wanted.

Greenspun said his files contained material on Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) but he said it "absolutely"

did not link Muskie with organized crime.

In another memorandum, McCord gave further explanation of why he agreed to participate in the Watergate operation. As security director for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, McCord said he felt the "Watergate operation might produce some leads" about possible encouragement of "radical groups" by the Democrats, "... and I had been advised that the operation had the sanction of the White House and of the Attorney General (Mitchell) while he was Attorney General."

After the noon recess, McCord demonstrated for the committee and the television audience how an electronic bug was attached to two phones in the Democratic National Committee's Watergate headquarters. McCord provided one light moment in the hearings when he told chief committee counsel Samuel Dash, just prior to the demonstration, "My counsel has asked for assurance that I won't be prosecuted for this installation."

The nationally televised hearings continue today.