

McCord and Caulfield: Fri

By Jules Witcover

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Jim McCord and his friend Jack Caulfield have come a long way from the second overlook on the George Washington Parkway where they met the night of last Jan. 12 to talk about a White House offer of executive clemency for McCord.

Yesterday in the packed Senate Caucus Room, Caulfield, then a Treasury Department official, now on leave, sat in the witness chair before the Senate select committee on the Watergate, telling his side of the story. Three chairs back, McCord, already convicted as a conspirator, sat with his eyes closed, listening.

What Caulfield said, and McCord heard, was essentially a corroboration of McCord's story that Caulfield had conveyed the offer, with one important difference—Caulfield denied he had ever said that the President knew the offer was being made.

The two former security

officers were good friends, each had acknowledged before the network television cameras. But when McCord, yesterday's first witness, left the chair and moved back to make room for Caulfield, no word was heard or greeting seen to pass between them.

Tall, red-faced, curly-haired and altogether as Irish-looking as a Jack Caulfield should be, the new witness proceeded to deliver a 26-page statement of sad but wiser recollection.

Like McCord, Caulfield recited his record of a lifetime of commendable police and security work: Bronx cop on the beat; detective monitoring terrorist groups and guarding VIPs; award winner for various busts from "arrest of the perpetrators of the bazooka shelling of the United Nations" to "seizure of a store of contraband weapons destined for Ireland."

"My father hasn't yet gotten over that," he ad libbed in a rare departure from the text, bringing an equally rare burst of laughter from the silent, attentive audience.

He had gotten involved with the Nixon people as early as the 1960 campaign, Caulfield said, helping Secret Service agents guarding then-Vice President Nixon in New York. On the strength of that, he landed a job in the 1968 campaign as a traveling security man, and in April, 1969, joined the White House staff as an investigator.

It was in September, 1971, that the paths of Caulfield and McCord first crossed. Caulfield interviewed McCord for a job as security officer for the Republican National Committee, and from then until last June the two—in Caulfield's words—"grew to be personal friends." They even talked in 1972 of "the possibility of going into business together, after the election campaign was over," Caulfield testified.

But, alas, that was not to be. The business they did get into together after the election instead brought them within three chairs of each other yesterday, both entangled in the web of Watergate, McCord already

facing a prison term, Caulfield apprehensive. "If," he told the senators, "upon a hearing of all the facts it is thought that I am guilty of some wrongdoing I will still feel that the truth is my best defense."

Caulfield—John J. Caulfield, 43, who looks like the bodyguard he once was for former Attorney General John N. Mitchell—painted himself as a kid from the Bronx whose basketball talents won him a partial scholarship at Wake Forest but whose family straits forced him to drop out, go into the Army and then become a cop.

But he was ambitious, and when the main chance came his way, he grabbed it. John D. Ehrlichman, then the Nixon campaign tour director, told him on election night in 1968 "that in view of my work he would be happy to recommend me," Caulfield told the senators. Whereupon a few days later Caulfield phoned Ehrlichman and told him he'd like to be chief U.S. marshal, no less.

ends Have Come a Long Way

It was a case of overreach, and Caulfield finally settled for the White House security job, which was not bad for a cop from the Bronx. In July, 1972, he became acting assistant director of enforcement in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Fire Arms. Not bad either.

Thus it was that when Caulfield's good friend, Jim McCord, became involved in the Watergate break-in and was threatening to sing, it was with considerable reluctance that Caulfield agreed to be the go-between to help render him mute.

When John W. Dean III, the counsel to the president, called him to ask McCord to dummy up, Caulfield said, "I immediately realized that I was being asked to do a very dangerous thing . . . I said to Mr. Dean that I did not think it was wise to send me on such a mission since Mr. McCord knew, as many others did, that I had worked closely with Mr. Dean and Mr. Ehrlichman . . .

The reason I raised the question with him was because, frankly, I did not wish to convey the mes-

sage." Caulfield finally got Dean's approval to have a third party pass the message.

But McCord did not want to play ball, and so the two old friends finally found themselves sitting in Caulfield's car at the second overlook off the GW Parkway. It was, according to Caulfield, a rendezvous conducted in remorse.

"I sympathized with Mr. McCord's situation and made remarks such as, 'I can't understand how this all has happened; I'd give anything if I had not recommended you for your two jobs with the Republican Party' . . . I did try to impress upon Mr. McCord that I was simply a messenger and was not too pleased to even be doing that"

Through all this recounting yesterday, McCord sat behind, eyes closed, an occasional tight smile on his thin lips, absent-mindedly scratching his nose—but listening.

Once, when Caulfield told of how McCord had come up

with a way the White House could get him off the hook if it wanted to, McCord came out of his reverie. Caulfield said McCord had told him that several months earlier he had called two foreign embassies he was sure were being wiretapped by the government, and had said he was involved in the Watergate and wanted to know about getting visas. If the government could find a record of these two taps, McCord argued, his lawyers could get the case against him thrown out on grounds that wiretap evidence was used.

"What? What's he say?" McCord turned and half-whispered to Bernard Fensterwald, his lawyer. McCord in telling the same story last week never explained why he had called the embassies or what he had said. Client and lawyer conferred for a moment, then McCord sat back, closed his eyes again and listened.

Shortly before the committee quit for the day, the senators were called from the Caucus Room for a vote. Mc-

Cord and Fensterwald took advantage of the recess and walked out. Reporters hurried after the two and just outside the door to the chamber, surrounded McCord and asked about the big difference in his and Caulfield's stories—was President Nixon mentioned by Caulfield at the parkway meeting, or wasn't he?

"I'll tell them what I want to say and he'll tell them what he wants to say," McCord offered, "and if they want to call me back . . ." He trailed off as Fensterwald led his client away.

Back in the hearing room, Caulfield still sat in the witness chair, his lawyer, John P. Sears, a White House political adviser to Mr. Nixon in 1969, at his side. But the senators, like the departed McCord, had heard enough for one day. They asked Caulfield to come back today to answer questions—very probably without his good friend, Jim McCord, listening. There in the Caucus Room, anyway.