

No Clemency Offered, Bugging Figure Says

By Lawrence R. Meyer
and Peter Osnos

Washington Post Staff Writers

Convicted Watergate burglar Bernard L. Barker testified yesterday that he had never been offered executive clemency or "pressured" into pleading guilty during the Watergate trial in January.

Barker's testimony before the Senate select Watergate committee conflicted sharply with the earlier testimony of fellow Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr., who told the senators that Barker had discussed such overtures with him.

Time and again under questioning by the committee and its staff, Barker insisted that he had not been offered executive clemency and that the decision to plead guilty was his own.

Pressed to explain why he had participated in the break-in and bugging of the



ALFRED C. BALDWIN
... not a "double agent"

Democratic National Committee's headquarters, Barker told the committee that he thought the operation involved national security and that his participation, under the leadership of then White House consult-

ant E. Howard Hunt, would aid the cause of Cuban "liberation."

Hunt also pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges at the January Watergate trial.

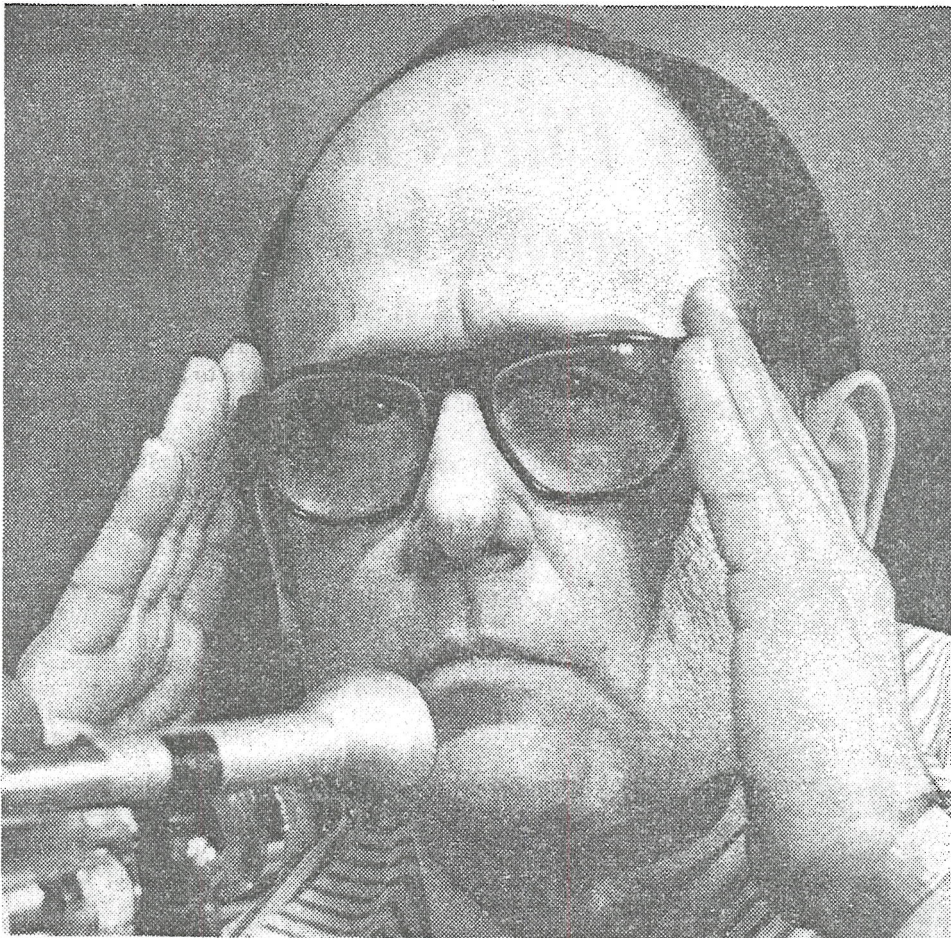
Following Barker's testimony, the committee heard from Alfred C. Baldwin III, the man whom McCord stationed in the Howard Johnson's motel across from the Watergate to monitor the bugged conversations of Democratic National Committee employees.

Baldwin denied that he was a "double agent," supposedly working for the Committee for the Re-election of the President but in reality working for the Democrats.

Baldwin's testimony, elicited by Sen. Lowell P. Wei-

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Senate committee closely questions attorney Gerald Alch.
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United Press International

Bernard Barker testifies before the special Watergate investigation panel.

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cker (R-Conn.), otherwise closely followed his story at the Watergate trial about how McCord had first hired him as a security guard for Mrs. John Mitchell and later told him to monitor the Democratic telephone conversations from the Howard Johnson's and prepare logs on what he heard.

Barker, 56, a short, plump man with a swarthy complexion, explained to the committee how he had served as the "executive arm, the principal assistant" to Hunt during the Bay of Pigs operation in 1961 and how 10 years later Hunt had recruited Barker for other operations.

According to Barker's testimony, he never questioned Hunt's authority to conduct the operations for which Barker and the men Barker enlisted were recruited—burglarizing the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, "infiltrating" a demonstration at the Capitol and finally breaking into the Watergate twice.

"I was not there to think," Barker told the committee at one point, a remark that summed up his apparent attitude that an order from Hunt was a command.

Barker and three other men from Miami—Frank Sturgis, Eugenio R. Martinez and Virgilio R. Gonzalez—were arrested inside the Watergate June 17 along with McCord. Barker and the three men from Miami subsequently pleaded guilty.

McCord told the committee during his testimony that in the first week of the Watergate trial, which began Jan. 8, Barker told him several times that pressure was being exerted on him and the other three men from Miami to plead guilty and that they were being offered executive clemency. McCord told the committee that he received similar pressure, but resisted it.

The question was put bluntly to Barker yesterday by Fred Thompson, minority counsel to the Senate committee:

Thompson: "The question is whether or not you came during the trial to Mr. McCord and told him that you had been offered executive clemency?"

Barker: "I deny that."

Thompson: "You would remember that, would you not?"

Barker: "I certainly would remember if I had discussed, but I could not re-

member something I was not offered. I was never offered any kind of clemency whatsoever."

Barker and the other three Miami men were closely questioned on Jan. 15 by Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica about their roles in the Watergate operation.

At that time they all told Sirica that their pleas were not coerced and they had been offered neither money nor executive clemency. They further denied any knowledge of "higher-ups" being involved in the operation.

At one point, Sirica told them: "Well, I'm sorry, I don't believe you."

Although the committee pressed Barker for more details yesterday, his testimony produced little of substance in the way of indicating whether others were involved besides Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, the convicted leaders of the break-in.

At one point Barker conceded that secrecy, especially after capture by "the enemy," had been a watchword when he was involved in CIA operations. When several committee members asked Barker if he thought he was still bound by that code of secrecy in testifying before the committee, he never gave a direct response.

Barker asserted that Hunt had never paid him for assisting in any of the operations he was involved in from 1971 on, but he conceded that Hunt's late wife, Dorothy, had given him almost \$50,000 after June 17 for bail, expenses and legal fees.

Asked what conditions—including maintaining silence and a guilty plea—were imposed on these payments, Barker replied, "There were absolutely no conditions and the answer to (the question of) a plea or to remain silent is negative."

In the world of Bernard Barker, his testimony made clear the considerations were patriotism, loyalty, obedience and the cause of Cuban liberation from the regime of Fidel Castro. Although Barker was born in Cuba, he told the committee his parents were Americans, he was American and that he had live half his life in Cuba and half in the United States.

Barker, known as "Macho" (he-man) to his Cuban friends in Miami, proudly told the committee that he was the first Ameri-

can in Cuba to enlist after Pearl Harbor. Barker was a captain in the Army Air Corps, was shot down on a mission and spent 16 months in a German prison camp.

During an interview with The New York Times last September, Barker compared his prison camp experience and, his current circumstances, in which Barker said government prosecutors had threatened after June 17 to keep him in jail until he talked:

"I said, 'This was tried by Nazi interrogators (during World War II) with a hell of a lot more going for them than you have,' " Barker quoted himself as saying. "I said, 'This has been tried by experts, and it just doesn't work.' I don't talk, period."

After the war, Barker worked for the Cuban secret police, lost his American citizenship under circumstances he did not make clear, regained it, and eventually fled Cuba when Castro took over in 1959. Before fleeing, according to one friend, Barker was nearly sent before a Castro firing squad.

Barker's story of his relationship with Hunt, as outlined in Barker's testimony yesterday, began in 1961 when Barker said he was "practically Eduardo's (Hunt's) executive arm in the Bay of Pigs. I was his principal assistant." Barker said he was dedicated to Cuban liberation. "I have not changed my mentality since that time."

After the abortive Bay of Pigs operation, Barker said, he and Hunt remained in contact through letters for 10 years. Hunt, Barker said, "returned (to Miami) 10 years to the day of the Bay of Pigs operation and I found a note (pinned to his door): 'If you are the same Barker I once knew, contact me, Howard.' "

The note contained the name of the hotel in Miami Beach where Hunt was staying, Barker said, he contacted Hunt and they went with each other to the 10th "reunion" of the Bay of Pigs, with Hunt going "incognito" under his code name of "Eduardo."

Barker said he did not press Hunt to say what was on his mind because Barker expected Hunt to tell him when he was ready "and eventually he did."

Eventually, Barker said, Hunt gave him assignments for three operations. The first was the break-in at the

Los Angeles offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist in September, 1971. The second was during memorial services for FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in Washington in May, 1972. And the third was the Watergate operation in May and June, 1972.

"The original operation," Barker told the committee, "was the Ellsberg operation. It was explained to me that this was a matter of national security. After this operation, the second operation was on Mr. Hoover's death and this was an operation to give assistance and to infiltrate a group of persons who were at the Capitol steps.

"The third operation was the first entry into the Watergate. There was a second entry at the Watergate when we were captured. At no time was I told any different from the original motivation for which I had been recruited," Barker said.

Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.), the ranking minority member of the Senate committee, pressed Barker to explain why he did what he did, starting with the Ellsberg break-in, which was planned by Hunt and Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy, according to Hunt's grand jury testimony:

Baker: "Mr. Barker, what on earth would motivate you at your station in life, at your age and with that background to do something that surely you knew to be illegal?"

Barker: "Senator, E. Howard Hunt, under the name of Eduardo, represents to the Cuban people their liberation. I cannot deny my services in the way that it was proposed to me on a matter of national security, knowing that with my training I had personnel available for this type of operation, I could not deny this request at the time."

Baker: "Why?"

Barker: "Because I felt it was my duty to comply with Mr. Hunt's request."

Baker: "Why?"

Barker: "Because it involved a national, a matter of national security."

Baker: "Why?"

Barker: "Because this was a service to my country, sir."

Baker: "What national security?"

Barker: "Discovering information about a person who I had been told by Mr. Hunt was a traitor, who was

passing, he or his associates, to a foreign embassy."

Baker: "Who?"

Barker: "The Soviet Embassy." (No information has ever been made public indicating at any time that Daniel Ellsberg or anyone else passed information to the Soviet Embassy.)

Barker said that the break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office did not produce the documents he was sent to find.

The second operation, according to Barker, involved infiltrating an antiwar demonstration on the Capitol steps at the time that J. Edgar Hoover's body was lying in state in the rotunda. The demonstrators, according to Barker, included Ellsberg, lawyer William M. Kunstler and "long-haired, hippie types."

Baker: "Why? Why did you do that? What did that have to do with your business in Florida or your loyalty to the United States or freedom of Cuba? Why were you concerned with infiltration of a group which was demonstrating either against the war or in presence of the last rites for J. Edgar Hoover? Why did you do that?"

Barker: "I was following Mr. Hunt's instructions."

Finally, Baker asked Barker what motivated him to help break into the Watergate complex.

Barker said he was told to get documents from the Democrats' headquarters—documents that were never found—"that would prove that the Democratic Party and Senator (George S.) McGovern were receiving contributions nationally, and national and foreign contributions from organizations that were leftist organizations and inclined to violence in the United States, and also from the Castro government."

Barker said that it "had been rumored and had been spoken of freely in Miami" that the Castro government was aiding the Democrats, "however, I have no hard evidence at all that this was true."

But that was not the whole motivation, Barker said. "As I explained before," he told the committee, "we were assisting Mr. Hunt, who was a known factor in the time of the liberation of Cuba. We had hopes that Mr. Hunt's position in the White House would be a decisive factor at a later date for obtaining help in the liberation of Cuba."

Finally, Barker told the committee, Hunt had a "double operation" for Barker and told him "get your men in training going up and down stairs."

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) asked Barker if he thought the Watergate break-in was a CIA operation. "I don't know the real answer to that," Barker replied.

"It could or could not be a CIA operation."

In any case, Barker said many of the techniques were the same as those used in CIA operations, and his attitude and that of his "team"—the men from Miami—was the attitude they adopted when working for the CIA.

Barker explained the "philosophy" of the CIA:

"If you are caught by the enemy, every effort will be made to retrieve you, all of your expenses will be taken care of, and your family will be provided for. This was true of the Bay of Pigs invasion; to my knowledge, some of those families that at that time, are still being taken care of that I know of.

"If it was a CIA operation, only the CIA would admit this, not I. I did not need to be told what it was. I knew the persons involved. Mr. Hunt had been my superior in the Bay of Pigs invasion and I would assume that Mr. Hunt, who was counselor to the, at the White House, had the authority to order me at that time or to request for me to become involved in a matter of national security for which my training and my disposition was available at that time.

"As a matter of discipline," Barker continued, "of compartmentation and of habit, we do not discuss these operations with anyone even amongst each other. This was a rule between our team and it is the type of training we have received. We have never discussed this, amongst ourselves."

"Even with Mr. Hunt?" Barker was asked. "Even with Mr. Hunt," Barker replied.

"Compartmentation," Barker explained later, "means you do not speak of these matters. You work on a need-to-know basis. If I worked for Mr. Hunt, I not only would not need to know, I would not want to know (who was involved above Hunt)."

If Hunt had told him to plead guilty, Barker was asked, was that an order?

"Pleading guilty was not an operation," Barker responded. "This was my own decision, sir."

"An important part of an operation would be silence?" Inouye asked.

"Yes, sir," Barker replied.

The committee chairman, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) asked Barber about secrecy: "If Hunt had told you to keep silent, would you keep silent and not tell us he had told you to keep silent?"

"That's a very confusing question," Barker responded without answering further.

In contrast to other committee witnesses who have been implicated in the Watergate scandal, Barker showed no remorse for his role.

"Do you look upon your being in jail as an honor?"

Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.) asked Barker.

"I don't consider my being in jail for this matter or anything else I have done a

dishonor," Barker replied.

Did he still feel that national security was a proper justification? Weicker asked Barker.

"I feel it was a proper justification for Ellsberg (the Ellsberg operation), and although not in the same degree, it was a justification for Watergate."

Barker said he "never asked" what connection the Watergate operation had to national security. "It is not customary in a hierarchy to question your superior."

"Today," Barker said toward the end of his testimony, "I am confused by all the information but I see no reason to condemn the nature of the operation."

"We're just plain people who believe Cuba has a right to be independent," Barker said at the end, his voice breaking slightly with apparent emotion. "There was no need to buy silence. We are not for sale."