

'Deal' Told in Bugging Trial

Washington

An attorney for four of the original defendants in the Watergate bugging case has told federal prosecutors that his clients accepted offers of money and executive clemency in return for their guilty pleas at the Watergate trial in January, well informed sources said yesterday.

The disclosure by Henry B. Rothblatt, the lawyer, to members of the Watergate special prosecutor's office reportedly was made at a secret meeting yesterday after the four men, all of whom were arrested inside the Democratic national headquarters last year, waived their attorney-client privilege on the matter.

At the time they entered their pleas of guilty to charges of second-degree burglary and wiretapping, the four men — Bernard L. Barker, a Miami real estate agent, and three of his associates, Frank A. Sturgis, Eugenio R. Martinez and Vir-

gilio R. Gonzalez—all insisted before the court that they had not been induced or pressured into changing their pleas of not guilty.

Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the U.S. District Court here, who accepted the guilty pleas on January 15, replied "I'm sorry, but I don't believe you" when the four men denied that "higher-ups" had pressured them or offered them money.

Barker subsequently maintained the same position in public testimony before the Senate's Watergate committee in May when he said that "there were absolutely no conditions" attached to some \$17,000 he received for lawyers' fees and other expenses from the wife of E. Howard Hunt Jr., another Watergate defendant who pleaded guilty.

The two other defendants, James W. McCord Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy, stood trial and were convicted.

According to the sources, Rothblatt told members of the special prosecutor's staff yesterday that his four



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HENRY B. ROTHBLATT
New disclosure

clients were offered a "package deal" by Hunt that included promises of executive clemency after serving "a little less than a year in prison, payments of \$1000 a month to support their families during their incarceration, and "rehabilitation" after their release.

"They bought it hook, line and sinker," one source said, adding that the offer was made by Hunt to the four men at a meeting in Washington a few days after the trial began.

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