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Watergate Sentencing Set Friday

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U.S. District Chief Judge John J. Sirica yesterday denied motions by six of the original Watergate defendants either for new trials or for permission to withdraw pleas of guilty, and set final sentencing for the six for 10 a.m. Friday.

The orders affect James W. McCord, who was convicted after a month-long trial, and four who pleaded guilty: E. Howard Hunt, Eugenio Martinez, Virgilio Gonzalez, Bernard Barker and Frank Sturgis.

McCord never has been sentenced. The other five have been serving provisional sentences conditioned on their continued cooperation with ongoing Watergate investigations.

The provisional sentences, as required by the statute under which the five men were sentenced, were for at least 35 years. Judge Sirica has made it clear that he will reduce those terms, saying a sentence of that length "would not only be unwarranted but unjust."

In denying the motions yesterday, Judge Sirica did not file a written opinion explaining his action.

He said, however, that he ruled on the basis of lengthy papers filed in support of and in opposition to the motions, and after hearing several hours of oral argument by lawyers.

Hunt faces a possible maximum sentence of 35 years in jail and a \$40,000 fine.

The other five, who were actually found inside Democratic offices at the Watergate complex around 2 a.m. in June, 1972, face possible maximum sentences of 40 years in jail and \$50,000 fines.