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2d Watergate Figure Freed

The U.S. Court of Appeals here yesterday ordered that Frank A. Sturgis, one of the original Watergate defendants, be freed pending his appeal to withdraw his guilty plea in that case.

The U.S. Parole Board already had ordered that Sturgis be freed March 7 in connection with his sentence in the Watergate case, but Sturgis' attorney pointed out that after that time his client faces yet another sentence in an unrelated case. He was sentenced to nine months on a federal auto theft charge in Florida last month.

Attorney Daniel Schultz said one of the other Miami Watergate defendants, Virgilio Gonzales, has decided to wait until his March 7 parole date to be released rather than go free pending his appeal. Another Miami defendant, Eugenio Martinez, has not decided which he would like to do, Schultz said.

The fourth Miami Watergate defendant, Bernard Barker, has already been freed pending his appeal. He is not yet eligible for parole in the Watergate case, since he received a longer sentence than the other three men.