

The Pattern of Watergate Cases

Washington

While more than 60 individuals and corporations have been convicted or have pleaded guilty to criminal charges growing out of the Watergate scandals, only a handful have gone on trial.

The legal pattern was set two years ago, on Jan. 10, 1973, when E. Howard Hunt Jr., a defendant in the original bugging and break-in case, pleaded guilty before Judge John Sirica of the U.S. District Court here.

Four of his co-defendants took a similar course, and only two — G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord Jr. — remained to be found guilty by the jurors on Jan. 30.

Since then, practically all of the Watergate figures have chosen to plead guilty before judges, sometimes without a grand jury indictment against them.

Prosecutors would simply file the equivalent, an information, with the plea.

The parade of Nixon campaign workers and White House officials began on June 27, 1973, when Frederick Larue, an assistant to former Attorney General John Mitchell, who headed the re-election campaign, pleaded guilty of conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Larue, a Mississippi oilman who became an important witness for the prosecution, is awaiting sentencing. But many of the most prominent Watergate figures are already serving prison terms.

Jeb Magruder, former deputy director of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, was sentenced last May 21 to a term of ten months to four years for conspiracy to obstruct justice and defraud the United States.

John W. Dean III, former counsel to President Nixon, was sentenced last August 2

to serve from one to four years, and Charles Colson, former special counsel to the President, received a one-year to three-year term.

Richard Kleindienst, who succeeded Mitchell as attorney general, pleaded guilty last March 16 to a misde-

meanor charge for withholding information in an appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee. He got a one-month suspended sentence.

In one of the few cases to reach a jury between the original break-in trial two years ago and the climactic proceeding that ended yesterday, Ehrlichman was convicted last July 12 of a civil rights conspiracy and other charges in a September, 1971, burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

Ehrlichman was sentenced to serve 20 months to five years in prison in that case.

Others who chose jury trials and were found guilty by the panels included Dwight Chapin, the former White House appointments secretary, and Ed Reinecke, the former lieutenant governor of California.

Reinecke received a suspended sentence.

A few who took their cases to a jury were acquitted.

Mitchell and Maurice Stans, the former secretary of commerce, were found not guilty in New York of charges based on a \$100,000 payment from Robert Vesco, the fugitive financier.

The most recent report by the Watergate special prosecutor shows convictions of 35 individuals and 14 corporations. It does not include, however, yesterday's convictions, cases, made before the special prosecutor was established, a few recent proceedings, a few trials in state courts, and Watergate matters not handled by the special prosecutor.

New York Times