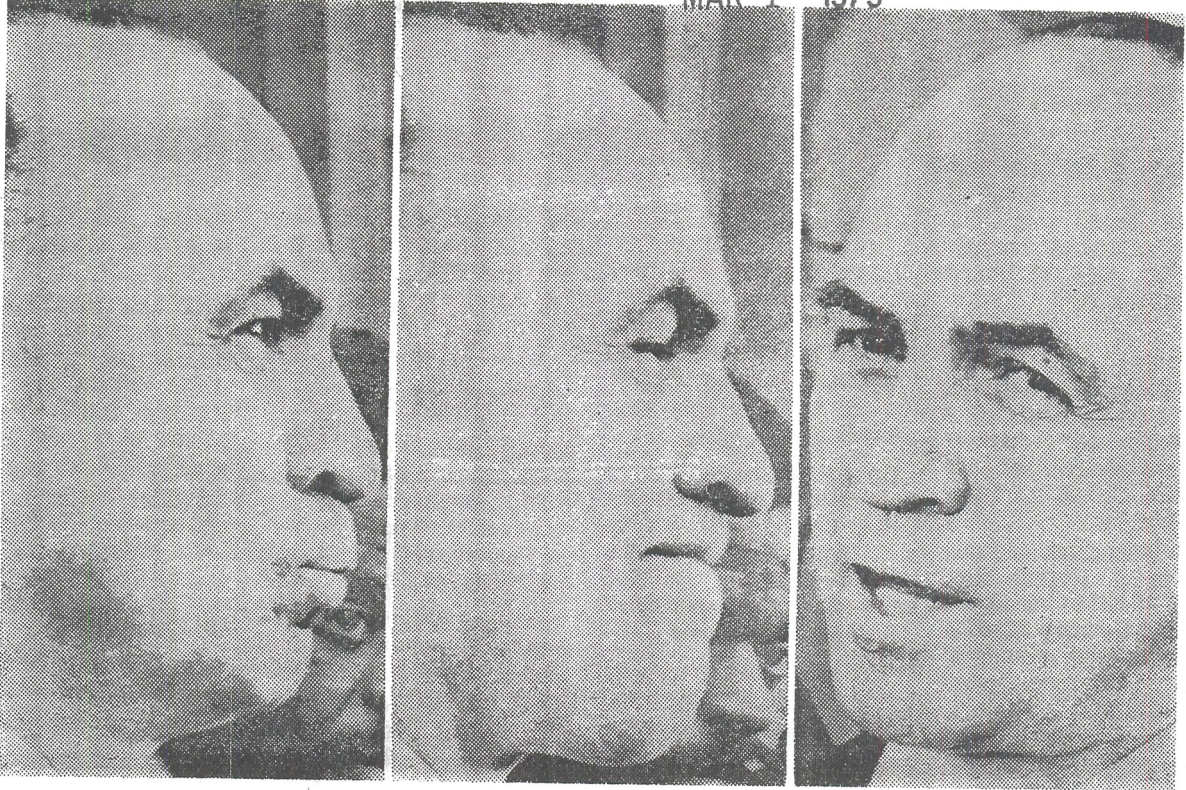


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AP Wirephoto

Watergate figure James McCord Jr. as he talked with newsmen outside the courtroom

McCord's Still Free

Washington

A federal judge yesterday granted Watergate burglar James McCord three extra weeks of freedom in which to press his claim that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell meddled in his trial.

U.S. District Judge George L. Hart Jr. approved McCord's request for extra time to seek a hearing on his contention that he was denied a fair trial.

Hart ordered McCord, who has been free on bond for most of the past two years, to begin

servicing his one- to five-year Watergate sentence in Allenwood, Pa., federal prison on March 21.

McCord, the wiretap expert on the Watergate burglary team, told newsmen as he left court he has "massive evidence" to prove that his original lawyers — F. Lee Bailey and Gerald Alch — conspired with Mitchell to hush up the facts of the Watergate case.

"They did not properly represent me," he said. "They were in collusion with John Mitchell to keep me silent."

United Press