

SFChronicle
Sirica Modifies Penalty

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McCord's Sentence Cut

Washington

The sentence of James W. McCord Jr., one of the five men arrested in the Watergate break-in, was reduced yesterday to four months in prison.

U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica signed an order modifying McCord's sentence of one to five years, imposed on Nov. 9, 1973.

McCord entered the federal prison farm at Allenwood,

Pa., on March 21, after losing a long fight for a new trial and numerous appeals that went as high as the Supreme Court.

McCord, a Central Intelligence Agency agent for 19 years, had served about a month in jail before he was sentenced.

McCord, 51, was convicted along with G. Gordon Liddy in January, 1973, of burglary, wiretapping and conspiracy in connection with the break-in. Liddy, who unlike McCord refused to cooperate with investigators, is serving a 6-to-20 year sentence.

It was McCord's letter to Sirica, read in open court on March 23, 1973, that set off coverup investigations eventually leading to the resignation of President Nixon and conviction of many of his top aides.

McCord was working on the prison farm when Sirica signed the order, and his lawyer, William Mann, was unable to reach him immediately.

A spokesman for the Bureau of Prisons said McCord has served a total of 82 days to date, counting brief jail

stays in 1972 and 1973, and has been credited with an additional five days for good behavior.

By rough calculation, the spokesman said, McCord could be released by May 23.

Three of the four men arrested with McCord inside Democratic party headquarters on June 17, 1972, were placed on probation after serving minimum terms of one year. The fourth, Bernard L. Barker, recently lost an appeal and must return to prison unless he gets a further stay.

Another Watergate figure, E. Howard Hunt Jr., returned to prison Friday, after losing his appeal from a 2½-to-8 year sentence.

Sirica's order specifies McCord must remain on unsupervised probation for two years after his release.

Sirica previously had reduced the sentences of other major Watergate figures, John W. Dean III, Jeb Magruder and Herbert W. Kalmbach. The sentence of Charles W. Colson was cut by another judge, Gerhard A. Gesell.

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