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Tom Braden Nixon's Man Of the Sword

"ALL they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," wrote Matthew, and it does seem likely that increased attention will eventually make presidential assistant Charles Colson so embarrassing a figure that Mr. Nixon can no longer afford to have him around.

Mr. Colson is Mr. Nixon's man of the sword; that is to say he has replaced Murray Chotiner as Mr. Nixon's principal exponent of dirty tricks. It is worth noting that at the very moment when Colson was being mentioned in the press in connection with the wiretapping incident at the Democratic National Committee, he was also being mentioned in the press as one of those who traveled back to Washington with the President on the trip home from San Clemente.

Whether the President chose to have Colson with him because he likes his company or whether he decided that it might cast more suspicion upon Colson if Colson were suddenly dropped from the presidential entourage is a question which only Mr. Nixon could answer. But it is a fair bet that Colson is slated for the boondocks sooner or later if only because this is a campaign year and Democrats must take what ammunition is available. Colson provided them with a lot of it.

HE WAS practicing law in Washington when he joined the White House team, and he first attracted the attention of the White House press corps as the silent manager of the Rev. Carl McIntire's descents upon Washington for a series of "win the war" rallies.

McIntire, who has become the virtually unchallenged leader of the country's radical right, seemed at the time to be a natural means to counterattack the peace demonstrators who were giving the President a hard time.

As the war went on and

the temper of the country changed, he became obsolete, and his last rally here was a total flop. Colson provided liaison and encouragement to McIntire from the White House.

Subsequently, Colson was also revealed as having provided White House liaison for a series of advertisements linking Democratic

senators campaigning for re-election in 1970 with legalized heroin, abandonment of war prisoners, immediate surrender and other outrageous or onerous ideas. Naturally, the senators protested. When the elections were over, former Attorney General John Mitchell's Justice Department promised "an immediate investigation." The results were never revealed.

At about this same time, an investigative reporter for Life magazine admitted that he had received leads and information on a sensational article about then—Sen. Joseph Tydings of Maryland from Charles Colson in the White House. The article purported to prove that Tydings had improperly intervened on behalf of a law client to secure a government loan. It turned out that Tydings had not been a senator when he made the intervention and so the point of the piece was somewhat blunted, but it helped to defeat Tydings in his race for re-election, which was doubtless why Colson interested himself in placing it.

IT NOW appears that Colson was involved in the bugging or attempted bugging of the Democratic National Committee. Apparently, he hired Howard Hunt and installed him at the White House desk. A floor plan of the Democratic National Committee, a part of a bug and a gun were found when Hunt disappeared.

It was an odd assortment to be found in a White House office, and one wonders how the nation's schoolteachers handled inquiries from the children about the duties of those who work in the nation's most-honored places.

But Colson himself is an odd man to find in the White House or traveling in the same company with White House intellectuals such as Dr. Henry Kissinger or George Shultz and White House executives like Robert Haldeman and John Erlichman. Democrats seem certain to keep pointing this out until, like Chotiner before him, Colson is forced into exile and rehabilitation before he is permitted to surface again.

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Marquis Childs, whose column appears regularly in this space, is on vacation until August 14.