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A 'Scheme to Defame' Is Charged to Colson

The criminal information filed by the special prosecutor's office against former White House aide Charles W. Colson formally sets forth the crimes he allegedly committed against Pentagon papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg to which Colson pleaded guilty yesterday. The document asserts:

INFORMATION

The United States of America, by its attorney, the special prosecutor, Watergate special prosecution force, charges:

1. At all times material herein, up to on or about March 10, 1973, Charles W. Colson, the defendant, was acting in the capacity of an officer and employee of the United States government, as special counsel to the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon.

2. On or about June 28, 1971, and for a period of time thereafter, in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, Charles W. Colson, the defendant, unlawfully, willfully and knowingly did corruptly endeavor to influence, obstruct and impede the due administration of justice in connection with the criminal trial of Daniel Ellsberg under indictment in the case of United States v. Russo, Criminal Case No. 9373, United States District Court, Central District of California, by devising and implementing a scheme to defame and destroy the public image and credibility of Daniel Ellsberg and those engaged in the legal defense of Daniel Ellsberg, with the intent to influence, obstruct, and impede the conduct and outcome of the criminal prosecution then being conducted in the United States District Court for the Central District of California.

3. The aforesaid scheme by which Charles W. Colson, the defendant, unlawfully, willfully and knowingly did corruptly endeavor to influence, obstruct and impede the due administration of justice in connection with the criminal prosecution of Daniel Ellsberg consisted of the following acts:

(1) In July and August 1971, the defendant, and others unnamed herein, endeavored to and did release defamatory and derogatory allegations concerning one of the attorneys engaged in the legal defense of Daniel Ellsberg for the purpose of publicly disseminating said allegations, the known and probable consequences of which would be to influence, obstruct, and impede the conduct and outcome of the criminal prosecution of Daniel Ellsberg.

(2) In July and August, 1971, the defendant, and others unnamed herein, endeavored to obtain, receive and release confidential and derogatory information concerning Daniel Ellsberg, including information from the psychiatric files of Daniel Ellsberg, for the purpose of publicly disseminating said information, the known and probable consequences of which would be to influence, obstruct, and impede the conduct and outcome of the criminal prosecution of Daniel Ellsberg.

(In violation of Title 18, United States Code Section 1503.)

Respectfully submitted,
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Force
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DATED: June 3, 1974.