

'When Colson takes the stand, it's hard to believe he won't remember what Ehrlichman and the President tried to do to him'

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 tential trouble it can cause him now with Hunt about to start talking.
 Then Haldeman tells Ehrlichman a story Colson has been spreading about him. Colson has been spreading, Haldeman informs a surprised Ehrlichman "that you and Dean told him to promise clemency but that he was smarter than you and didn't."
 At this point in the transcript Ehr-

lichman, Haldeman, and the President all seem to come to the realization that Colson has been busy spreading potentially damaging stories about each one of them.
 "This is a little strange," Haldeman says.
 "Well anyway I better change my (unintelligible)," the President says.
 From what follows, the "unintelli-

gible" word might well be "scapegoat."
 Haldeman and Ehrlichman are prompting the President to go through a charade of figuring out who's truly loyal to him and who's questionable.
 "Well let me say," says the President. "I don't think that Magruder or La Rue or Mitchell or Magruder or anybody want to hurt the President."
 "No sir," says loyal Haldeman.
 "I feel that way," says loyal Ehrlichman. Then Ehrlichman sticks in the knife. "Colson? How about Colson?" he suggests.
 Magruder hates Colson, Haldeman tells the President.
 "Does he?" the President asks.
 "They all do," Haldeman replies.
 Confident that Colson no longer has any allies, the President gets right down to plotting how to make Colson the new fall guy:
 "You see you can make a hell of a circumstantial case on Colson," the President says. "He's the guy that you know he's Dean's buddy, and Liddy he knew well. . . . You know but Colson is closer to this crew of robbers than anybody else."
 Having figured out how Colson could be incriminated with responsibility for the break-in, they discover a way to make him responsible for the cover-up too.
 "How do you handle the problem of clemency?" the President asks.
 "Well, you don't handle it at all," Haldeman says. "That's Colson's 'cause that's where it comes from."
 And three days later the President tries to foist his new fall guy on Henry Petersen.
 Petersen has come to urge the President to force Ehrlichman and Haldeman to resign because of da-

damaging new testimony from Magruder and others.
 The President is trying to wheedle from Petersen some rationale for keeping Haldeman and Ehrlichman on the job, particularly Ehrlichman.
 Petersen outlines some of the damaging testimony against Ehrlichman.
 Then the President tries to steer Petersen away from Ehrlichman to Colson.
 "Let us suppose you have witnesses who give testimony the other way. Then what would you do with Ehrlichman on that? You have heard—Colson apparently for example is supposed to know about that and who else was there when they talked about the, the, ah?"
 H. P. "Clemency?"
 P. "Leaving the country and all that business."
 This attempt to sacrifice Colson to save Ehrlichman's neck doesn't get very far with Petersen, but the President persists.
 H. P. "Well I don't know about Colson—Colson is again peripheral . . . P. "Colson was a big fish in my opinion." (Emphasis mine.)
 A little thing like that might disturb even a sweet-tempered child of God like Colson. After all, the President had practically ordered the head of the Justice Department Criminal Division to indict Colson.
 It is hard not to believe that Colson didn't take this into account when deciding whether to make a deal with the Special Prosecutor to plead guilty and testify.
 And when Colson takes the stand to testify about his dealings with Ehrlichman and the President, it's hard to believe he won't remember what they tried to do to him. Of course as a

new born Christian sincerely learning the ways of mercy Colson may well tend to forgive and forget some of the more damaging things, he knows about the President, Ehrlichman, and Haldeman. For the Colson of old there was no forgive and forget. There was remember and avenge. But vengeance is mine saith the Lord, and Ehrlichman and the President must be hoping that Colson is really listening to Him these days.
 * * *
 The one institution that might tempt Colson to take vengeance into his own hands, now that he's pleaded guilty and is free to testify, is the CIA.
 "There are records showing that the CIA deliberately planted stories with several major new organizations accusing me of involvement in criminal activities," Colson charged in the statement he released after pleading guilty.
 For 15 months now Colson has been engaged in a peculiar feud with the CIA. Colson thinks the CIA has conspired against him. And he may be right.
 I first noticed Colson's obsession with the CIA in the course of reading his lengthy "Motion for Discovery" of "exculpatory material" in possession of government agencies. Colson's discovery motion is packed with requests for CIA files and memos on everything and anything. The motion takes great delight in putting on the public record the names of case officers ("Messrs. Richie and Gonzalez" for Barker and Martinez, for instance and alleged CIA fronts (The Mullen Company of which we shall hear more later).
 But the most intriguing, and—for the CIA—possibly damaging request in the motion is for a mysterious "35 to 50 page document."
 Item III H. (13) of defendant Colson's Motion for Discovery asks the government to turn over any and all "documents or records indicating that the CIA obtained a copy of a 35 to 50 page document written by Dr. Ellsberg and maintained in Dr. Fielding's files."
 This seems to be the first time any figure involved in the case—either investigator or investigated—has

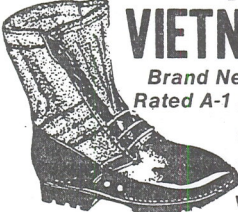
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Continued from preceding page implied that somebody got something about Ellsberg out of his psychiatrist's files.

"It came as a complete surprise to me when I read it," one of the other defense attorneys told me. "I'd never heard of any such document before."

Shapiro refused to comment on the item, citing Judge Gesell's ruling against talking about the case to the media.

Up until now it has been generally conceded that three three-man plumbers entry team (Bernard Barker, Eugenio Martinez, and Felipe De Diego) found nothing useful in Dr. Fielding's office. It was "a dry hole," as P. so felicitously called the Watergate entry and bugging.

Of course it has been conceded that Martinez and De Diego did photograph some files in Fielding's office

with the camera Hunt procured from the CIA. And it is true that the CIA film lab did develop pictures of files taken inside Fielding's office, (the claim has always been that the Cubans took pictures of wrong files). And it is also true that when Hunt finally returned the borrowed CIA camera, the agency discovered that he had "accidentally" left some undeveloped pictures inside, pictures the agency developed and turned over—all of them, the agency says—to Watergate investigators.

By requesting the CIA to produce the mysterious "35 to 50 page document" Colson plants a hint in the public record that either (1) the plumbers team did find an Ellsberg document in his psychiatrist's office and that they knowingly or "accidentally" turned it over to the CIA which has since covered up its existence, or (2) the CIA procured the

"35 to 50 page" Ellsberg document from Dr. Fielding's files by its own methods, legal or illegal, and has continued to cover up its possession. (Ellsberg himself was "out of town" and unavailable to comment about the document as of deadline time.)

There is a third possibility: that the so-called "35 to 50 page document" does not exist at all except in gossip, hearsay, or Colson's imagination, that the request for the document in the discovery motion was one more effort by Colson to retaliate for CIA planted stories about him, by planting some CIA cover-up stories himself.

The origins of Colson's feud with the CIA go back to the beginning of the Watergate cover-up and the relations—close at the time, fragmented now—among Colson, Colson's protégé Hunt, and Hunt's employer, a man named Robert Bennett, president of a powerful and somewhat mysterious public relations firm that once served as a CIA cover company, a firm called Mullen and Company.

CIA loyalists claim Colson started the feud when—after a year of pressuring the agency to help Hunt on, non-agency projects such as the Dita Beard affair.—Colson proceeded to engineer the White House attempt to blame Hunt's bungled Watergate burglary on the CIA to divert attention from the White House.

In March 1973 the CIA retaliated against him, according to Colson. An article entitled "Whispers About Colson" appeared in the March 5, 1973, issue of Newsweek replete with information from unidentified sources implicating Colson in several seamy affairs including the 24-hour surveillance of Teddy Kennedy and George McGovern and the Dita Beard Denver caper. According to "Whispers," Colson was "in the cross hairs" as the man responsible for the Watergate break-in itself.

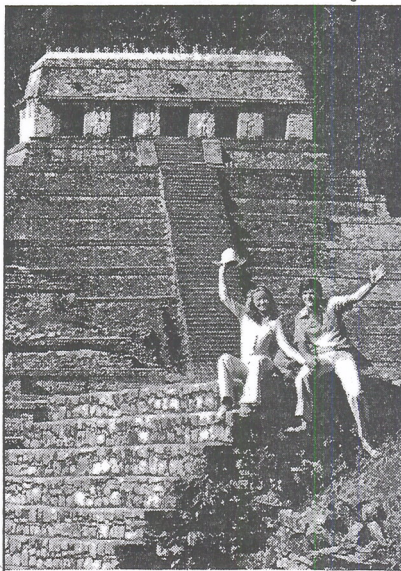
A footnote in Colson's voluminous "Motion to Dismiss Indictment due to Prejudicial Pretrial Publicity" states: "It has been learned subsequently that this article and others were intentionally generated by the CIA in order to divert attention from a CIA cover agency, Mullen and Company, which was coming under scrutiny because of Howard Hunt's employment at Mullen." According to the motion the Mullen Company itself leaked the damaging material on Colson in behalf of the CIA.

Colson's motion charges that the alleged CIA-Mullen Company conspiracy to plant adverse publicity about him was "the most outrageous instance of government misconduct" in the whole case. And before Colson left the case, Judge Gesell inspected two Top Secret CIA case officer reports which led Gesell to inform the courtroom that "you may assume that the CIA did inspire the 'Whispers About Colson' story."

CIA loyalists don't deny Mullen Company "contributions" to the story, but claim Colson's attack on the Mullen Company was nothing more than an attempt to divert attention from the truths in the story.

According to a person friendly to the interests of the CIA and the Mullen Company, "last winter Colson decided to say to the Special Prosecutor you shouldn't indict me until you're checked out every conceivable possibility and one possibility you haven't checked out is that Hunt never left the CIA because are you aware that the Mullen Company is a CIA cover company. Colson suggested to the Special Prosecutor that wasn't it conceivable that Hunt was in the Watergate on Mullen

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Colson

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Company—that is CIA—instructions rather than White House instructions and if that could be proven the CIA becomes the bad guy and everybody in the White House goes free."

And according to James McCord's new book, "Reports in February and March 1974 were that Colson was trying to create a diversion for Nixon by steering the news media to Robert Bennett and the Mullen Company telling them that if they really wanted the truth about Watergate to look into Bennett to get the true story of the CIA and Watergate."

In "Compulsive Spy" ex-Times reporter Tad Szulc's biography of Howard Hunt, Szulc reports that the Mullen Company—a public relations firm with powerful Republican con-

nections located at 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, across the street from CREEP headquarters, and a stone's throw from the White House—"held a Howard Hughes account" which "turned out to be of intense interest to the White House." According to Szulc it was Robert Bennett, President of Mullen Company and, for a time, a close acquaintance of Colson and Hunt, who first passed along to the White House, presumably through Colson, the information that Larry O'Brien had also done public relations work for Howard Hughes. According to some Watergate investigators it was O'Brien's relation to Hughes, and White House fears about what O'Brien might have learned about Hughes's relation to Nixon, that became the real motive for the break-in to O'Brien's office at the Watergate. And according to McCord's book it was also Robert Bennett of the Mullen Company who first passed along the tip from his Hughes contacts, that enough political dynamite "to blow Muskie out of

the water" could be found secreted in the safe of Las Vegas publisher Hank Greenspun, a bit of gossip that engendered a strange Hunt scheme to break into Greenspun's safe and escape to Nicaragua on a jet supplied by Howard Hughes.

I called Robert Bennett at the Mullen Company offices and read him the passage from McCord's book quoting Colson to the effect that Bennett knew "the truth about Watergate." I asked Bennett what the truth about Watergate was.

Bennett chuckled indulgently as the best p. r. men do. Then he read me a long prepared statement and declined further comment on the subject.

According to the prepared statement, "some years ago" the CIA approached the President of the Mullen Company and told him "there was an emergency and the CIA needed a cover quickly."

Mullen cooperated and the arrangement whereby "CIA men stayed on the Mullen payroll at selected cities abroad" continued for years beyond the "emergency."

The day after Howard Hunt formally retired from the CIA he walked into the Mullen Company and landed a public relations job "although he had never been one of those assigned to the Mullen Company payroll" by the CIA, according to the statement.

Shortly after Watergate, "after Hunt's name became connected to the CIA," the statement goes on, "we

became concerned that there would be exposure of the company's overseas cooperation with the CIA that would be to the detriment of the U. S. government. We informed the Justice Department of all the details of the arrangement. Ties between the Mullen Company and the CIA had been ended by July 1973."

Bennett refused to comment about Colson's feud with the CIA but he did speak a little about Hunt's p. r. work on Mullen Company accounts.

"We did a publicity job for the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped aimed at handicapped children in an effort to bring their kids in to the various places of treatment rather than warehouse them in the attic someplace. He did a good job. We named the campaign 'Take a Closer Look' meaning you take a closer look at your handicapped child because at first glance it may seem he's dumb but 'Take a Closer

Look' and maybe he only needs glasses."

Hunt laid out the strategy and tactics for the "Take a Closer Look" campaign. He also wrote a brochure called "You Are Not Alone" (full title: "If you have a handicapped child you are not alone.") Hunt also wrote scripts for tapes.

"I remember we had a contract for a trade show over in Yugoslavia," Bennett says. "To write the script for the little dingsy you hold to your ear as you walk around."

"Little dingsy?"

"One of those tape things, talking guides, a tape kind of thing. Howard did that. He did a good job of work for us."

And that, for what it's worth, is all the truth about Watergate" the Mullen Company will give out. But as Colson's protegee Hunt says in his Mullen Company brochure: Take a Closer Look.

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