

another copy in Colson file

# Colson Role in Chappaquiddick Quiz

By Jack Anderson

The ~~White House~~ financed a trip to New England by Waterbugger E. Howard Hunt to investigate Sen. Edward Kennedy's role in the Chappaquiddick tragedy, according to Charles Colson, who ordered the mission.

The former White House aide confessed his part in the snooping operation during a secret deposition taken May 28 by lawyers for the Democratic National Committee.

Colson told under oath how Hunt came to him in July, 1971, with a tip that a policeman, identified only as "Demott," had confidential information on the case.

Because Kennedy was a potential presidential contender, the White House was eager to learn more about the 1969 drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne during a drive with Kennedy.

## Rehash

Colson instructed Hunt to interview the policeman whose information, said Colson, proved to be a rehash of published material. The White

House paid Hunt's air fare either to Massachusetts or Rhode Island for the interview, Colson recalled.

## 'Attack Group'

In his deposition, Colson also spoke fully for the first time of his mysterious "Attack Group," which worked out of the White House in 1972. Its job, he said, was to coordinate policy for surrogate candidates who were carrying the political attack to the Democrats.

Colson vigorously denied he had advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in. The most he did, he said, was phone campaign deputy Jeb Magruder to arrange for the Watergate ringleaders, Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy, to explain their intelligence plans. But Colson insisted he did this at Hunt's request and never learned the actual plans.

On balance, Colson denied more than he admitted. He flatly contradicted press reports that he had recruited men to pose as homosexuals in the McGovern campaign. He also denied knowing Hunt had once forged documents to

show the late President John F. Kennedy had conspired to assassinate the late South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

**Democrat Deal:** The Watergate spotlight has caught in its sweep many a moneybag who contributed generously to President Nixon's campaign and received a government favor in return. But there were Democrats, too, who engaged in this sort of exchange.

A defaced "m" in a typed bill introduced by Sen. John Sparkman (D-Ala.), for instance, led us to the typewriter of John Horne, a former Sparkman aide who is now a director of the billion-dollar Continental Investment Corp.

We established that Horne had written the measure and Sparkman had rushed it through his Senate Banking Committee without bothering to have it retyped. The bill would allow Continental's brokerage company to continue collecting fat brokerage fees until 1975 from a mutual fund company also owned by Continental. This would benefit the company at the expense of the shareholders.

Until a few days ago, we thought Sparkman had granted this legislative favor because of his long friendship for Horne. But now we have learned that Continental executives funneled money into Sparkman's 1972 campaign.

In December 1971, C. Robert Strader, vice president of Continental's brokerage firm, wrote his top aides in confidence: "In regard to the Senator Sparkman Campaign, would you be good enough to forward your check, made payable to the Sparkman Campaign Fund, to Mr. Reasoner immediately..." William Reasoner is president of the brokerage subsidiary.

Again in February 1972, Strader made another pitch to his harassed executives: "Everyone in the Home Office is being asked to contribute the cost of one or more \$100 fund-raising tickets based on their salary level... Forward your check to me made payable to the Senator John Sparkman Campaign."

Whatever the total, it was a good investment. Sparkman's bill will benefit Continental many times above the amount its executives raised.