

Hoffa Assails Release Terms

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By Cathie Wolhowe

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Former Teamsters Union President James R. Hoffa said yesterday he believes former White House aide Charles Colson received sizable campaign contributions for President Nixon's 1972 campaign in exchange for keeping Hoffa out of union politics until 1980.

Hoffa produced no evidence to back up his contention, and Colson immediately denied the charges.

Mr. Hoffa needs a new crystal ball because the one he is using is cracked," Colson said upon hearing of the allegations. "No, money, not on any occasion, was ever paid to me regarding Mr. Hoffa. The charge would be funny if it was not so serious."

Hoffa said he had conducted his own investigation into allegations in the Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader that the White House received \$300,000 to prevent Hoffa from being released, and then, when it became clear he would be given a reduction in sentence, that another sum of at least \$350,000 was paid for a conditional release.

Although Hoffa said he had not learned who paid the money, he noted Colson had been retained as the Teamsters' attorney which "leads you to think he used his position in the White House to ingratiate himself with Frank Fitzsimmons," the present Teamsters president against whom Hoffa may run in 1976 if he can. Hoffa added that he had no proof Fitzsimmons was connected with the restrictions.

Hoffa said his investigation indicated orders restricting his release "were steered directly from Colson to Dean to Traylor." He was referring to former White House counsel John Dean and U.S. pardon attorney Lawrence Traylor.

"I don't know who decided on the restrictions," Traylor said upon hearing of Hoffa's comment. "It certainly was not added in my office. The restriction is not normal procedure, but it has been done in a few cases."

Hoffa was released from prison two days before Christmas, 1971, after he had served four years and nine months of his combined 13-year sentence for jury-tampering and mail fraud. The terms of his commutation papers put him on parole until March of this year, but barred him from the "direct or indirect management of any labor organization" until March, 1980.

In an interview June 8 with The Washington Post, Hoffa did not mention Colson or Dean but said he thought former Attorney General John Mitchell "put in the 1980 restriction without the President's knowledge."

Mitchell, through one of his attorneys here, Plato Cacheris, called the allegation incorrect and said only he had "long and lengthy conversations" with Dean about the President's power to attach the restriction. Mitchell added that Fitzsimmons "had nothing to do with it."

Hoffa says he is going to court to have the restriction removed and thinks he will be successful because "the Presi-

dent does not have the right to add to your sentence something the judge does not add."

Even if the restriction is not removed, Hoffa says he plans to run for his old job in 1976, when Fitzsimmons' present term expires.

Hoffa made his comments at a news conference for the Crisis Control Center of the National Association for Justice. As director of the center,

Hoffa said it would "handle calls from prison inmates or officials in an attempt to head off possible rioting or other kinds of prison disturbances."

Before prison wardens permit inmates to use the toll-free line, Hoffa expects he will need a court order. Since the center was started two months ago, Hoffa said he had received "no cooperation" from any of the prisons.



Associated Press

Hoffa holds press conference at offices of National Association for Justice, a prison reform group.