

Hunt 'Believes' Colson Knew of Burglary Plans

9/23/77

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Convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. has told Senate select Watergate committee investigators that "he believes" former special White House counsel Charles W. Colson knew of plans to burglarize the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist and that Colson also had prior knowledge of plans to conduct a surreptitious intelligence operation against the Democrats.

TUW 2:15 a.m. 9/22/77

Hunt's statements concerning Colson are contained in a summary of Hunt's interviews with the Senate committee's investigators that was obtained yesterday by The Washington Post. Hunt is scheduled to begin testifying when the committee resumes its hearings Monday morning.

According to the committee staff summary, "Hunt now states that he believes Colson knew the nature of Hunt/(G. Gordon) Liddy Special Project No. 1 to be a break-in, but that he (Hunt) did not inform Colson."

Colson has consistently denied that he had any prior knowledge of the Ellsberg break-in, which was conducted in Los Angeles on Sept. 3, 1971, at the offices of Dr. Lewis Fielding, Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

Colson could not be reached for comment yesterday, and Colson's lawyer, David I. Shapiro, declined to comment when contacted by telephone.

In his interview with the committee staff according to the 25-page summary, Hunt described how he was hired in July, 1971, by the White House, with Colson's recommendation, to be a \$100-a-day consultant working on the Pentagon Papers.

"Colson's initial directive to Hunt," according to the summary, "was to become the resident White House expert on the origins of the Vietnam war, including how the Nixon administration had been dragged into the war. Colson wanted Hunt to stay abreast of the problems associated with the leak of the Pentagon Papers and other (news) leak problems.

"Colson's principal focus was to have Hunt develop derogatory information on Daniel Ellsberg and prepare this information for dissemination by Hunt or Colson to mass media," the summary states. "Hunt notes that Colson's principal objective in developing information on Ellsberg was to publicly discredit Ellsberg." The summary states that Hunt was responsible for "developing information on

Ellsberg's personal life (sexual habits, drug experimentation), possible motivations for leaking the papers, and the identity of other conspirators. Hunt kept Colson abreast of all information he received and of the general course of the investigation."

According to the summary, "Hunt proposed to Colson on July 28, 1971, in a memorandum entitled 'Neutralization of Ellsberg' that he (Hunt) build a file of all available overt, covert and derogatory information, including obtaining Ellsberg's files from his psychiatric analyst."

See HEARINGS, A13, Col. 1

HEARINGS, From A1.

The staff summary says that on Aug. 27, 1971, presidential domestic adviser John D. Ehrlichman asked Colson for "a game plan" as to how and when to use the materials to be obtained in Hunt/Liddy Special Project No. 1."

Ehrlichman was in charge of the special White House investigative unit, popularly known as "the plumbers," that was formed by President Nixon in July, 1971, to stop leaks of government information.

During its hearings last summer, the Senate Watergate committee released on Aug. 11, 1971, a memo to Ehrlichman, Egil M. Krogh

Jr. and David R. Young, the two men who directed the activities of "the plumbers," recommending "that a covert operation be undertaken to examine all the meical files still held by Ellsberg's psychiatrist . . ." The memo included Ehrlichman's initialed approval with the notation "If done under your assurance that it is not traceable."

Ehrlichman, Krogh, Young and Liddy all were indicted on charges of conspiracy and burglary by a Los Angeles County grand jury this month in connection with the Ellsberg break-in.

Colson, who was to have been the first witness to appear before the Senate committee when it resumed its hearings after recessing Aug. 7, asked to be excused after he reportedly was informed that he is a target of a second federal Watergate grand jury investigation here. That investigation, which also is focused on the Ellsberg break-in, is being directed by Special Watergate Prosecutor Archibald Cox.

According to the Senate committee of Hunt's staff interviews, Hunt attempted to show Colson the fruits of the break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office but, "Colson replied, 'I do not want to hear anything about it.'"

The committee summary states that Hunt gave three motives for the break-in: to explore the possibility of espionage, "for the prosecutorial aspects of the case" and, quoting Hunt, "There was the possibility of obtaining derogatory information for Colson's usage." The summary indicates that Hunt "revised" his testimony to include the third motive after initially listing only the first two.

In November 1971, the committee staff summary states, Hunt was told by Liddy that Liddy—then a White House employee—would be moving to the Committee for the Re-election of the President to serve as general counsel "but secondly Liddy would have a covert role as the director of a massive intelligence complex" that would include electronic surveillance.

Liddy kept Hunt informed of meetings with Attorney General John N. Mitchell, White House counsel John W. Dean III and deputy Nixon campaign director

Jeb Stuart Magruder to place the intelligence operation, according to the summary.

"In January," the summary says, "Hunt had informed Colson of Hunt's projected assistance to Liddy on the intelligence plan. Because of Hunt's increasing involvement with Liddy, the amount of time in which Hunt was able to spend in the White House was drastically reduced. Colson told Hunt during this January, 1972, meeting that he understood this and was well aware of that fact."

At one point, according to the summary, Colson told Hunt that Hunt was "more qualified than Mr. Liddy" to direct a project to gather intelligence about the 1972 Democratic presidential convention and campaign. Hunt, however, indicated that he "was perfectly satisfied with the arrangements as they were."

Hunt, the summary states, "had the impression that Colson was well aware of the convention intelligence plan. Hunt also had the impression that Colson had been discussing these plans with someone at CRP (the Nixon re-election committee) regarding Hunt's possible employment there."

Sometime in February, ac-

According to the summary, Hunt arranged a meeting between Colson and Liddy. Hunt told the committee staff that he is not sure if Colson spoke to deputy Nixon campaign manager Magruder on the phone during the meeting, "although he does recall Colson's speaking on the phone."

During this period, Liddy was experiencing difficulty getting his extensive intelligence-gathering plan approved.

Magruder testified before the committee that he had received a phone call from Colson urging that Magruder "get off the stick" and secure approval of Liddy's plan. Magruder told the committee, however, that he did not know if Colson was aware what Liddy's plan involved.

After the meeting with Colson, the summary states, Liddy told Hunt, "Well, I

think I may have done us some good," Hunt understood this comment to be in reference to getting approval for Liddy's plan. Because Colson did have prior knowledge to (sic) Liddy's plan before Colson actually met Liddy, this statement from Liddy led Hunt to believe that (the) Liddy and Colson conversation did concern the plan and its future approval. With this understanding, Hunt believes, if Magruder was in fact contacted by Colson and encouraged to approve the budget for the Liddy plan, then Colson must have realized what general elements of the plan he was recommending to Magruder."

The committee summary also quotes Hunt as saying that his former attorney, William O. Bittman, received a series of clandestine cash payments for legal

fees, and for Hunt and the other defendants.

Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's personal lawyer who handled many of the payments to defendants and their lawyers, testified in July before the Senate Watergate committee that he had turned over \$25,000 to Bittman in the second week of July of last year.

Hunt, according to the staff summary of his interviews, said Bittman had informed him that the first payment of \$25,000 in cash was received July 7, 1972 in "an envelope in a phone booth located in a corridor of his office building."

In earlier Watergate testimony, campaign aide Frederick C. LaRue testified he transferred \$210,000 to Bittman and that it was his understanding Bittman would be designed to buy the silence

and disburse money to the various defendants and their lawyers.

Several Watergate witnesses previously have characterized the payments as of the defendants, although several White House officials denied this.

Bittman was called for comment, yesterday, but was not at home.

According to the committee summary, the cash payments to Bittman, in some cases, were passed on to Hunt and, in other cases, were kept by Bittman for his own legal fees. In all, Bittman's firm kept \$156,000 of the money, the summary says.

Despite the summary's statement that Hunt believes Colson was aware of a surreptitious intelligence plan directed against the Democrats, the summary also notes that Hunt signed

an affidavit April 5 which exonerated Colson of any advance knowledge of the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in.

Hunt, though, did not prepare the affidavit, the summary says. Instead, according to the summary, "the affidavit was handed to him by Bittman, already prepared for his signature, and that Bittman stated he had received the affidavit from Colson's office."

Hunt, according to the summary, also denies asking Bittman to speak to Colson in late December about money to take care of his family or about the possibility of executive clemency. Hunt acknowledges, the summary says, that Bittman and Colson "had a guarded conversation wherein Colson stated he would do whatever he could for his friend, Howard."
