

Hunt's role told in probe of ITT

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WASHINGTON — L. Patrick Gray III has disclosed that White House aide Charles Colson told the FBI that he sent Watergate wiretapper E. Howard Hunt to Denver in connection with the Senate investigation of International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. (ITT).

But Gray, whose nomination as FBI director is before the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he did not know and did not ask whether Colson sent Hunt to interview former ITT lobbyist Dita Beard.

"Our agents did not question Mr. Colson about that trip further since there was no involvement of the ITT case with the Watergate bugging," Gray said in a written statement to the committee.

The Washington Post reported recently that Hunt wore a red wig on his secret trip to interview Mrs. Beard, whose controversial memo suggested a link between settlement of an ITT antitrust case and an ITT pledge to contribute \$400,000 to the Republican convention fund in 1972.

HUNT, a former Central Intelligence Agency operative, pleaded guilty in January to burglary and wiretapping Democratic headquarters in the Watergate Building last June 17.

Hunt was hired as a White House consultant on Colson's recommendation, ostensibly to work on classification of government information after publi-



L. Patrick Gray

cation of the Pentagon Papers in June, 1971.

Hunt still had an office in the Executive Office Building adjacent to the White House at the time of the Watergate break-in, but White House officials say he last worked for them last March 29.

GRAY, who was assistant attorney general in charge of the civil division at the time of the ITT hearings relating to the nomination of Richard Kleindienst to be attorney general, played a major role in the ITT inquiry.

He decided which Justice Department files would be made available to the Senate Judiciary Committee and helped Kleindienst prepare testimony.

Gray also has revealed that

he sent a copy of the memorandum prepared by Mrs. Beard to John W. Dean III, White House counsel, at the time of the ITT investigation.

At that time, Gray said in another written memo to the committee, "I had no knowledge of Mr. Hunt or that he had been sent to Colorado concerning the ITT matter."

THE ACTING FBI director said Tuesday "I can still see no connection" between the Watergate case and the ITT affair.

Some committee staff members believe the new material indicates that Colson was working with Hunt shortly before the Watergate eavesdropping and during a time when Hunt was planting spies in headquarters of Democratic presidential contenders George S. McGovern and Edmund S. Muskie.

Gray testified Tuesday that Dean sat in on FBI interviews with White House employees at Dean's request despite Gray's wishes to the contrary.

Gray said Dean was there as the President's investigator to see if any White House aides were implicated in the Watergate case. A White House spokesman said many of these officials asked Dean to be present.

Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) has demanded that Dean appear before the committee to testify about his relationship with Gray. President Nixon has declared he would invoke executive privilege to prevent Dean's testifying.