

Colson Says He Put Hunt on I.T.T. Job

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WASHINGTON, June 14 — Charles W. Colson, former White House special counsel, confirmed publicly today that he had directed E. Howard Hunt Jr. to go to Denver in March, 1972, and interview Mrs. Dita D. Beard, Washington lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, about her memorandum linking a promised \$400,000 campaign contribution with Administration help in settling an anti-trust suit.

Disclosure of that memo by Jack Anderson, the columnist, on Feb. 29, 1972, was the occasion for the reopening of hearings by the Senate Judiciary Committee on the nomination of Richard G. Kleindienst to be Attorney General.

During the two months of hearings, high Administration officials denied that an out-of-court settlement that allowed I.T.T. to retain the Hartford Fire Insurance Company in return for divestiture of several other companies was related in any way to the I.T.T. pledge of up to \$400,000 in support for the Republican National Convention then planned for San Diego.

'Noble Commitment' Cited

Mrs. Beard had written her superior, William R. Merriam, vice president in charge of I.T.T.'s Washington office, that "our noble commitment has gone a long way toward our negotiations on the merger coming out as Hal [Harold S. Geneen, I.T.T. president] wants them."

After the memo was disclosed, Mrs. Beard disappeared from sight for several days. She was discovered in a Denver hospital under treatment for a heart attack. Later her attorney there, David Fleming, issued a statement by her that the Anderson memo was fraudulent, although some of its phrasing was identical to a memo she had actually written.

Last Feb. 8, Newsday reported that Mr. Hunt, the Watergate conspirator, had gone to Denver under Mr. Colson's orders and interviewed Mrs. Beard. It was later reported that Mr. Hunt had appeared before Mrs. Beard in a red wig.



Associated Press

Charles W. Colson, former Special Counsel to the President, before testifying to the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee yesterday.

Today before the House Commerce Subcommittee on Investigations, Mr. Colson said under questioning that Mr. Hunt had suggested that he interview Mrs. Beard, and that he, Mr. Colson, had agreed to the plan.

Authenticity Issue 'Central'

Mr. Colson explained that at the time a task force investigating the Beard memo had become suspicious that the Anderson version was "not authentic."

The question of authenticity "had become critical for the Administration," Mr. Colson said, because the memo had become "central to whether Kleindienst would be confirmed."

Mr. Colson said he was firmly convinced now that the Ander-

son memo was not authentic. He gave as his reasons the fact that Mrs. Beard's secretary had denied typing it, that Mr. Merriam had never seen it, and that "the most incriminating sentences were non sequiturs."

Later, Intertel, a concern of private investigators, said first that the Anderson memo had not been typed on Mrs. Beard's

typewriter. Intertel later said the memo had been typed on her typewriter, but that its authenticity was doubted. The Federal Bureau of Investigation had obtained the Anderson memo, which was an original copy, and stated that it had been typed on Mrs. Beard's typewriter and roughly on the date at the top, June 24, 1971.

Mr. Colson told the subcommittee that he had seen the copy given by the Senate committee to the F.B.I., and that John W. Dean 3d, the White House counsel, had shown it to him. He said he did not know how Mr. Dean had obtained it, but added that Mr. Dean was White House "liaison with the F.B.I."

Other Memos Discussed

Mr. Colson was also questioned at length about several interoffice memos and letters by I.T.T. officers to Administration officials dealing with a meeting that he and John D. Ehrlichman, former Presidential assistant for domestic affairs, had had with Mr. Geneen and Mr. Merriam in Mr. Ehrlichman's office on Aug. 4, 1970.

Mr. Colson said that the "thrust" of the discussion was "the Administration's antitrust suits against I.T.T. even though they were obviously on Mr. Geneen's mind."

At the outset of the hearing, Charles Morin, Mr. Colson's law partner, sought to explain

a memo he had written to Mr. Colson and Henry C. Cashen, another partner, last April 13.

In that memo, Mr. Morin had suggested that they "lean" on G. Bradford Cook, then chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, but since resigned, to get him to name King Mallory as S.E.C. general counsel. Mr. Morin proposed that they solicit influence from Mr. Ehrlichman, Kenneth Cole, his deputy, and Jerry Jones, a White House aide in charge of recruiting for top Administration posts.

"This is one of the chips we really should pick up, because it is a key job in the commission and one of extreme importance to us in representing our clients," Mr. Morin had written.

Today Mr. Morin told the subcommittee that the memo was "a silly document" dictated "off the top of my head." He said that he had no idea of "placing" a general counsel at the S.E.C. who would be beholden to the firm, and that he was simply concerned to get Mr. Mallory in the post because of his qualifications for dealing with "antitrust problems" before the S.E.C.

"I never heard the expression 'pick up the chips,'" Mr. Morin said.

"I am known for my colorful language," he said. "I guess I am pretty naive about politics and the language of politics. Perhaps this is the result of the fact that I come from Boston."

Mr. Colson said that neither he nor Mr. Cashen ever did anything about the memo, although Mr. Colson acknowledged that he had written a note on the memo to Mr. Cashen saying: "I'll call Cook if necessary, but I think Jerry Jones could lock this one for us."
