

Hunt Says Colson Ordered Break-In at Bremer Home

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About an hour after the attempt to assassinate Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace last year, special presidential counsel Charles W. Colson ordered E. Howard Hunt Jr. to fly immediately to Milwaukee and illegally break into the apartment of Wallace's suspected assailant, according to accounts of sworn testimony by Hunt.

Colson told Hunt to bring back information from the apartment of the suspect, Arthur H. Bremer, that might be useful in linking Bremer to left-wing political causes, according to the accounts of Hunt's testimony.

Hunt, then a White House consultant, said he never went to Milwaukee. He told Colson he could not get there soon enough to commit the burglary without running a high risk of getting caught, according to

accounts of recent testimony by Hunt to a closed-door session of the Senate's Watergate investigating committee.

Colson categorically denied to The Washington Post that he had ordered Hunt to Milwaukee for any purpose.

Hunt's attorney, William O. Bittman, confirmed on Tuesday that Hunt told Senate investigators that he was ordered by Colson to bring back information from Milwaukee about Bremer, the 21-year-old busboy who has since been convicted in the May 15, 1972, Wallace assassination attempt.

"There is no question," Bittman said, "that there was testimony about that . . . Colson asked him (Hunt) to go to Milwaukee and go into Bremer's apartment . . . I don't have a clear recollection of the reason why he was to go out there. I don't

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recall whether the word break-in was involved."

Hunt, a former CIA agent, pleaded guilty in January to all charges against him in the Watergate conspiracy and is now serving a 35-year provisional jail sentence.

Within hours of the Wallace assassination attempt, a White House official was asked by the Washington Post about the identity of the governor's attacker. During a subsequent conversation that evening, the official raised the possibility of Bremer's connection to leftist causes and the campaign of Sen. George McGovern, through literature found in his apartment.

The Associated Press, in a dispatch that May night, quoted a source close to the investigation as saying that scraps of paper found in Bremer's apartment "showed he allied himself with left-wing causes."

On the evening of the Wallace shooting, reporters said they were able to enter the Bremer apartment during a 1½-hour period shortly after the assassination attempt. Several said they entered only after FBI agents had been there once and left, and that agents later arrived at the apartment again, sealed it off and thereafter refused to let reporters enter.

The FBI, which moved into the case immediately,

has never fully explained why Bremer's apartment was not guarded to prevent access to the apartment by reporters.

Among items found by reporters in Bremer's untidy apartment were a Black Panther newspaper, a book depicting comic strip characters performing sexual acts, a Confederate flag, some Wallace campaign literature, two boxes of bullets and seven targets for pistol shooting.

According to the accounts of Hunt's sworn testimony to the Watergate committee, Hunt said that after a telephone call from Colson ordering him to Milwaukee, Hunt went to his home in Potomac, Md.

Apparently in a second telephone conversation, according to the accounts of his testimony, Hunt told Colson that it would take at least four hours to reach Milwaukee, at which time Bremer's apartment would be staked out by the FBI—thus making a successful burglary impossible.

After that, the sources said, Hunt testified the mission was aborted because it was apparent that an illegal entry was clearly impossible.

In denying that he asked Hunt to go to Milwaukee, Colson said it is "absolutely untrue and I'd swear it is untrue under oath."

Colson provided a reporter a copy of a memo

dated June 20, 1972, five weeks after the Wallace shooting and the day that Hunt's possible involvement in the Watergate operation was first made public. In the memo, titled "memorandum for the files," Colson said:

"I also talked to him (Hunt) on the telephone the night Governor Wallace was shot simply to ask for his reactions on what he thought might have been the cause of the attempted assassination. (Hunt was known of something of an expert of psychological warfare and motivations when in the CIA.)"

Colson said he provided a copy of the memo to then presidential counsel John W. Dean III on Aug. 29. In a covering memo to Dean, however, Colson said "I cannot be sure that my memory is all that precise."

After checking White House logs, Colson said Tuesday that he had dinner with the President the night of the Wallace assassination attempt and could not have talked to Hunt until after 10:45 p.m. Colson said it would have been wholly illogical for him to order Hunt to Milwaukee at that hour when there were no planes and the FBI should have been swarming all over Bremer's apartment.

(Hunt's testimony places the order from Colson about an hour after the 4 p.m. assassination attempt.)

In addition, Colson said

that he was in regular contact that night with Assistant FBI Director W. Mark Felt urging Felt to insure that the FBI was on the case fully. "Would it have been logical for me to push in the FBI and simultaneously order Hunt to Milwaukee?" Colson asked.

FBI sources said that the FBI moved immediately into the case before receiving word from the White House, but confirmed that Colson had talked several times with Felt. The President asked for a personal FBI briefing every 30 minutes the evening of May 15 on developments in the case, the sources said.

Senate sources said they place a different interpretation on Colson's June 20, 1972, memo for the files. One Senate attorney said, "The Watergate had blown, Hunt was going to be nailed and Colson writes a memo for his files to get his version down on paper of all the other expeditions Hunt had done for the White House."

In the three-page Colson memo, Colson attempts generally to dissociate himself from Hunt's activities, including the Watergate operation.

Gov. Wallace, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination at the time of the attempt on his life, was shot by Bremer in a shopping center at Laurel, Md.

It has been established

that Bremer stalked President Nixon to Canada during the President's 1972 state visit to Ottawa from April 12 to 15—a month before the Wallace assassination attempt. In his diary, Bremer contended that he narrowly missed several opportunities to shoot the President.

One White House source said that when President Nixon was informed of the shooting, he became deeply upset and voiced concern that the attempt on Gov. Wallace's life might have been made by someone with ties to the Republican Party or the Nixon campaign.

If such a tie existed, the source said, the President indicated it could cost him the election, which was then less than six months away.

"The President was agitated and wanted the political background on Bremer," the source said.

Hunt's allegations represent the third time in recent weeks that Colson's name has figured in reports of burglaries that purportedly were planned or carried out under White House supervision.

In the first instance, Hunt told the Watergate grand jury that, after returning from the 1971 break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist in Los Angeles, he went to Colson's office with photographs taken during the burglary.

"I have something that might be of interest to you," Hunt testified he told Colson, adding: "It has to do

with my activities this past weekend."

According to Hunt's testimony, Colson told him "I don't want to hear anything about them" and left the room.

In the other instance, John J. Caulfield, a White House intelligence operative, told federal prosecutors that Colson had suggested to him that he burglarize and fire-bomb an office in the Brookings Institution occupied by Morton Halperin, a friend of Ellsberg and a former aide to Dr. Henry Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's chief aide in foreign affairs.

Colson denied making the fire-bombing suggestion to Caulfield, and an associate of Colson said such a remark might have been made as a "joke." Colson has acknowledged attending a discussion among other White House aides about the possibility of retrieving information from the Brookings Institution by unspecified means.

Last week, Jeb Stuart Magruder, the deputy director of the Nixon re-election campaign, testified before the Senate committee that he made "the assumption" that Colson knew of plans to bug the Watergate before Democratic headquarters were placed under illegal electronic surveillance.

According to Magruder's testimony, Colson called him during February "and asked me in a sense would we get off the stick and get the budget approved for Mr.

Liddy's plans"—a reference to Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy. Magruder testified, that Colson "did not mention . . . anything relating to wiretapping or espionage at that time."

Magruder, added however, that Liddy only had one set of plans and those involved wiretapping.

In Colson's memo for the files that he said was dictated on June 20, 1972, he states:

" . . . Hunt dropped by my office with Gordon Liddy from the (Nixon re-election) committee. I believe this was in February . . . Both he and Liddy said that they had some elaborate proposals prepared for security activities for the committee, but they had been unable to get approval from the Attorney General (John N. Mitchell).

"I explained that Mitchell would soon be at the committee (as campaign manager) and that they should be persistent and see him because he was the only one who could authorize work they would be doing.

"While Liddy and Hunt were in my office, I called Jeb Magruder and urged them to resolve whatever it was that Hunt and Liddy wanted to do and to be sure he had an opportunity to listen to their plans. At this point Hunt said he wanted to fill me in and I said it wasn't necessary because it was of no concern to me, but that I would be glad to urge that their proposals, whatever they were, be considered.

"There was no discussion that I can recall of what it was that they were planning to do other than the fact that I have the distinct impression that it involved security at the convention and/or gathering intelligence during the Democratic National Convention."

In an interview an associate of Colson's said that despite Colson's realization that Hunt "came up with some very crazy ideas," Colson had no curiosity about the details of the intelligence-gathering plan and recommended its consideration sight-unseen.

"Colson was too busy, too involved in other things," the associate said.

Colson and his law partner, David I. Shapiro, have been actively campaigning in recent weeks to prove that neither Colson nor President Nixon knew of the Watergate bugging nor were they involved in the Watergate cover-up and that both have been unjustly accused.

According to reliable sources, Colson has several documents showing that former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and others attempted to blame Colson for some campaign espionage and sabotage.

Despite repeated charges that Colson was involved in the Watergate and other questionable if not illegal campaign tactics, some government investigators now believe that Colson may not be charged with any law violations.