

Colson: CIA Planted Critical Stories

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Former presidential adviser Charles W. Colson charged yesterday that the CIA planted derogatory stories about him in the press to divert attention from one of its cover agencies under scrutiny by Watergate investigators.

Colson, now under indictment in both the Watergate cover-up and White House "plumbers" cases, cited stories allegedly stemming from the CIA as typical of the "flood of publicity"

about the scandal that he said make a fair trial impossible anywhere in the United States.

Asking that his indictments be dismissed, Colson submitted 39 bound volumes containing more than 5,000 newspaper and magazine clippings to U.S. District Court seeking to prove his point.*

Colson's lawyer said much adverse publicity was the fault of deliberate news "leaks" by government agencies.

"The most outrageous instance of government misconduct occurred when the CIA planted adverse publicity about defendant Colson in order to divert attention from Mullen & Co., a CIA cover agency which employed Howard Hunt after his 'retirement' from the CIA," the brief said.

It cited specifically an article in the March 5, 1973, edition of Newsweek headlined "Whispers About Colson" and alleging his involvement "in various acts

of political espionage."

"It has been learned subsequently that this article and others were intentionally generated by the CIA in order to divert attention from a CIA cover agency, Mullen & Co., which was coming under scrutiny because of Howard Hunt's employment at Mullen."

Mullen is a public relations firm with offices a block from the White House that has been reported in the past to be a CIA cover. Hunt worked there after leaving the CIA as a writer and part-time White House consultant under Colson from 1971 until a few days after the June 17, 1972, arrests when his name was linked to the case.