

WATERGATE

The White House offer to 'take care' of ITT lobbyist

New York News

WASHINGTON — White House emissary E. Howard Hunt secretly assured ITT lobbyist Dita Beard that "she and her family would be well taken care of for life" if she repudiated, "in good faith," a memo she allegedly wrote linking settlement of an ITT antitrust suit with a pledge to help bankroll the 1972 Republican National Convention.

Hunt's offer was made on March 15, 1972. Eleven days later, Mrs. Beard, testifying from her hospital bed in Denver, told members of the Senate Judiciary Committee that she did not "write, compose or dictate the entirety of the memorandum."

A copy of Hunt's written account of his meetings with Mrs. Beard describes in detail how the former CIA agent, using a brown wig as a disguise, and the alias "Edward Hamilton" — the same name he would use during the abortive Watergate break-in three months later — flew to Denver on White House orders to talk

to the lady lobbyist and make his offer.

The sevenpage memo has been turned over by the White House to the House Judiciary Committee impeachment inquiry. It is a "blind memo," unsigned and addressed to no one. At several points, Hunt refers to his "principal," whom he phoned and who at one point told him to assure Mrs. Beard "not to worry about her (annual) bonus" from ITT.

Hunt has testified publicly that he was ordered to Mrs. Beard's bedside by then

White House special counsel Charles W. Colson. Colson has pleaded guilty in connection with the Ellsberg break-in conspiracy case and is expected to become a key witness for Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

Hunt writes in the memo: "She asked me what it was I wanted her to do."

"I told her the most useful action would be to have her return to Washington as soon as possible, making a brief statement denying authorship of the memorandum— if she were able to in good faith—and then collapse. She said that she was not in any sort of physical condition to permit travel at

"I suggested the possibility that she prepare a simple statement denying her involvement in the preparation and/or release of the memorandum. This, I said, could be given out by her attorney, Hack White."

Hunt wrote that he arrived at Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital at around 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, 1972.

"Dr. Dave Garland, Mrs. Beard's principal physician, was waiting for me in the lobby. I displayed (an Edward) Hamilton card and we went upstairs to her room, No. 269."

At the time of the ITT controversy, during Senate confirmation hearings for Richard Kleindienst, judiciary committee Democrats charged that the White House had attempted to "blacken" Mrs. Beard's character.



Dita Beard (l.) in hospital and E. Howard Hunt testifying