

Ex-Aide Going to Prison in a Week**Colson Laments Lesson Loss**

By Lee Byrd

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The greatest peril of Watergate, says prison-bound Charles Wendell Colson, is that, "We'll purge a few people and then we'll say, 'all the rest of us are saved.'"

"Well... all the rest of the country isn't saved by just exiling a few Nixon men," he declared.

Once one of the closest of the Nixon men, Colson faces, by his terminology, the longest exile yet decreed. He reflected upon Watergate and other issues in an interview just a week before he is to surrender himself for at least a year's imprisonment for obstructing justice.

"We've got to have several things happen out of Watergate if the country is to be better for it," Colson said. One has to be getting rid of the anger and hatred and divisiveness that Watergate has created...

"The second thing is we need some serious structural reforms in the political process and in the governmental process... changes that will

being less tempted to abuse their public trust."

Foremost in that area, he said, is "the need for public financing of political campaigns. I mean I think it's just ludicrous... you know, so many abuses have been revealed that if we continue just to apply Band-Aids the patient's gonna die, the country's gonna hemorrhage for this. We've got to get rid of the system of private finance."

Along with public financing of campaigns, said Colson, another prime objective should be greater congressional and executive oversight of the Central Intelligence Agency.

He confirmed that he had raised the issue of the CIA's involvement in the Watergate and Ellsberg break-ins with private detective, Richard L. Bast.

But Colson complained that several rather sensational assertions attributed to him by Bast were taken out of context from a discussion aimed merely at exploring "every possible theory." He said he did not, for example, mean to create the impression—as Bast's version of his remarks suggested—that President

Nixon felt imprisoned or threatened by CIA sympathizers at the White House.

"What I was saying," Colson explained, "is that I think of lot of people around the President were people with ties into the military and the intelligence establishment."

Colson said the CIA was "much more deeply involved in a lot of things than the public thus far knows. I'm gonna be doing a lot of testifying about this, I suspect, and I'd rather save it for that." Meanwhile, he said, a report on the subject being readied by Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) "is going to raise an awful lot of questions."

Colson, as yet, does not know where he will be confined. He likely will be kept near the capital for some time, however, since he will be a witness at the "plumbers" trial of John D. Ehrlichman and others and almost surely will appear before the House impeachment panel.

Many have viewed him as potentially star witness No. 2 against the President—the first being John W. Dean III. That prospect was spurred by

his surprise courtroom statement that his felonious attempt to smear Daniel Ellsberg was urged repeatedly by Mr. Nixon.

Some of Mr. Nixon's adversaries see Colson as a far more impressive witness than Dean, partly because he was closer to Mr. Nixon and also because he did not barter his testimony for immunity.

According to Colson, a lawyer now disbarred, his plea was a first in legal annals — and was made on his own initiative.

"I have always told the prosecutors that I have been part of an effort to discredit Ellsberg," he said. "As I said to the court... that was something I could in conscience plead to and that I felt was a useful plea."

Colson said it was he who "came up with the idea of applying this particular set of facts to the obstruction of justice statute and hopefully making a principle of it—that in the future anyone who tries to interfere with the rights of the defendants is going to violate a criminal law. There had never been a prosecution for this."