

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

FROM: PETE KINSEY

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW OF CHARLES COLSON- JAN. 20, 1975

On January 20, 1975, Senators Weicker and Baker and A.B. Culvahouse and myself met with Charles Colson at the US Courthouse in Washington DC.

As a preliminary matter, Sen. Weicker read back the notes of the interview which he had had with Colson on January 13, 1975. With certain corrections, Colson confirmed their accuracy. Colson indicated that it was Richard Ober - the CIA liaison man to Kissinger - who received packages from Howard Hunt and passed them on to Richard Helms. Colson stated that the impeachment hearings contain certain information related to an "MR. X" and that there is an affidavit stating that Hunt was bringing Ober packages through May of 1972 which were being passed on to Helms (Bill Gill of ABC News believes that the "MR. X" is, in fact, Ober). Colson indicated that although he did not know for sure, he believed the packages passed to Ober may have contained tapes. Colson bases his speculation on two things. The first relates to an NBC interview with Bernard Barker in April of 1972. Barker described being with Hunt during an interview with an individual in Miami who had been with Castro at the time Robert Kennedy was assassinated. Hunt had a tape recorder and when Barker asked Hunt what the tapes were for, Hunt replied that they were for the CIA (Bill Gill said that Hunt replied "taping for the old company"). The second basis for Colson's speculation related to the time when Hunt met with David Shapiro while trying to see Colson to pass on a request for money. When Shapiro would not let Hunt see Colson, Hunt said that the White House better get on the stick, that he had things on Ehrlichman, Krogh, and Young and that he believed Hunt was into a number of things which Colson was never apprised of.

Colson recounted an occasion when Hunt was complaining about his financial problems and the fact he was having to sell his house in order to pay the medical bills for his sick daughter. The next time he saw Hunt, Hunt told him that his financial problems were taken care of in that Helms had given him \$20,000 in cash.

Colson mentioned Morton Jackson again and the fact that Hunt had had breakfast with Jackson the morning of the Fielding break-in and that the Greenspun capes had been planned in Jackson's home.

On the subject of Lucien Conein, Colson stated he had reason to believe that the DEA activities abroad of the type we were interested in were being handled by Conein, eg. kidnapping, assassination.

Senator Baker queried Colson as to whether he believed Mullen and Co. was CIA propriety citing the facts that Caddy operated out of it, the firm's main clients were Hughes, the Free Cuba Committee and Rotary International. Colson also said that Mullen and Co. hired the people the CIA wanted to do.

Colson noted that the CIA Watergate ^{file} mentions that when Bob Bennett needed more money to hire a new man, the money was paid by Hughes rather than the CIA.

In response to a question by Senator Weicker, Colson stated that the CIA broke into the Chilean Embassy in the fall of 1971 to install wiretaps. The taps were shut off during the elections but resumed afterward to monitor information relating to trade delegations coming to the U.S.. The taps were removed in May of 1973 because the CIA thought Dean knew of their existence. Colson mentioned that in April of 1972, McCord had called the Chilean Embassy to get himself wiretapped.

With respect to the CIA's relationship with ITT, Colson recounted a statement by Geneen where Geneen said that "we're putting our money to work with your boys in Chile." Colson believes that Bennett's interest in Dita Beard was that he thought she might be the source of some ITT-Chile memos which had been leaked at the same time Dita's memo had been leaked.

Colson then began discussing conversations he had had with Nixon in January of 1973 (?) - (4).. He said that on January 13, Nixon got very excited over the prospects of CIA involvement in Watergate and instructed Colson to look into the matter. Colson said he met with ... four hours and went over all the evidence. Haig said

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the CIA was very important. Later, Colson said, he talked with Buzardt who told him to stay away from the CIA- that you can't tell where Hughes begins and the CIA ends and that there are some big Republicans involved. Colson said he talked to Nixon twice after that and that Nixon told him to stay out of the matter- that someone in Colson's office was feeding information to the CIA. Colson said that all of his conversations with Nixon had been subpoenaed, but only two were introduced. All the rest were withheld.

Colson said that in his conversations with Nixon, Nixon had an obsession about Hunt. In response to Colson telling Nixon to get out the Watergate story, Nixon kept referring to the trouble with Hunt arising out of Hunt's contacts with Ehrlichman and Colson. This conversation occurred on February 13, 1973. In an earlier conversation on June 20, 1972 when Colson was telling Nixon to expose those involved in Watergate, Nixon told Colson that "they know about Hunt" apparently, as Colson sees it, in an effort to slow Colson down. Colson remarked that the President's obsession about Hunt and his contacts with Ehrlichman and Colson ^{WAS} _A expressed months before the evidence shows that Nixon had knowledge of the Ellsberg break-in (March 17, 1973).

Colson recounted Bennett's inquiry to him about finding out what Maheu did with the \$50,000 that was supposed to go to Rebozo, and whether or not Maheu had pocketed the money. Colson sent a memo to Dean, which is now in the hands of the prosecutors.

Senator Baker inquired as to whether anyone could have had access to the White House tapes while they were being taped. Colson said it would be possible since Al Wong, who was the Secret Service technical services man at the White House was the

one who recommended McCord for a job at CREEP.

Colson told of a February 28, 1973 meeting at the Watergate Hotel between Bennett and Eric Isenstead. Bennett said "I will take care of Ervin if you take care of Hunt". A record of this conversation is in the CIA Watergate File.

Senator Baker inquired as to whether Colson had any knowledge of domestic assassination operations. Colson replied that he did not know but that such operations did go on overseas.

Colson said that the CIA had been trying hard to discredit Andrew St. George - that the agency was afraid of him.

Colson said we should look into the surroundings of the death of an Italian named Sarti, who was a major narcotics trafficker shot in Mexico about two years ago. Sarti bought his way out of jail and got to Mexico where he was shot. Colson said this case will show the other half of Conein's operation.

Colson discussed certain private firms either owned by the CIA or used by the CIA. These include:

-Intertel, a private detective firm in Washington owned by Hughes doing work for the CIA.

-Anderson Security Consultants - CIA propriety.

-Morton ^{Sackson} Johnson's Law Firm

There was also mention of the firm of Wagoner and Baroody which came out of the firm of Down and Roosevelt - the latter having definite CIA ties.

Senator Weicker inquired as to whether Pepsico may have CIA ties. Colson said that any firm doing business in the USSR automatically gets connected.

Colson recounted taking Hunt to Ehrlichman's office just after he was hired. Hunt told Colson he needed his "Bona fides" established at the CIA. However, Colson learned later that Hunt had already reported to Howard Osborne at CIA that he was in at the White House. Thus, as Colson sees it, Hunt didn't need his

bona fides established but rather needad only to make the tie offic.

Colson then began listing the areas we should explore more thoroughly:

- Richard Ober- believes his role was critical and that he would know what was being passed between Hunt and Helms.

-Fritz Kramer and Jay Lovestone- Lovestone ran the CIA projects for the AFL-CIO. Kramer is Kissinger's rabbi (who is somehow connected to Lovestone- this needs further exploration with Colson).

-Clifford Irving Manuscript- Colson said that something in the Irving manuscript threw the White House, Bennett and Hughes into a panic; Hunt and McCord were approached by Hughes' people to steal the manuscript. Hunt and McCord said they would need \$55,000 for the job. Hughes' people said "too much"; so the job was never pulled off. There was speculation around the table that by the time Hunt and McCord came around with the 55k figure, Hughes' people may have bought off Irving. Colson believes Bill Safire had a copy of the manuscript.

Colson mentioned that Helms had gone out of his way to get ^{Hunt} placed in a job. After Hunt went ^{to} work at Mullen, he complained that his pay was not comparable to what he had been payed at the CIA. Bennett then raised his salary to a comparable level.

Colson said Hunt's "casing" photos of the Fielding office were processed by the CIA. The photos were given directly to Helms with Fielding's name circled.

Senator Baker asked Colson if he knew why Hunt had stopped at the pentagon for two hours prior to leaving from Dulles on the Fielding break-in.

Colson's speculation that Hunt's and the CIA's justification for supplying the wig and other equipment to Hunt was fictitious. Hunt did not need any disguise to interview DeMott since Bennett had suggested Hunt interview DeMott and DeMott was a former employee of Bennett. Colson believes that the CIA used this as a good excuse for furnishing equipment to Hunt.

Senator Baker asked why Spencer Oliver Jr.'s phone had been tapped. Colson said he did not know except that both Larry O'Brien and Oliver Jr. were of the patronage of Maheu.

Colson said he knows that the CIA gave Hunt the name of a lock picker in January 1972, and that the CIA gave Hunt Anderson Security Consultants to use on a security job for Hughes in Las Vegas.

Colson mentioned a July 10 memo from Lakowski (phonetic) of the CIA to files. The memo stated that Bennett said that he had a backdoor contact with Edward Bennett Williams and if the CIA approved Bennett will feed information to him to get the heat shifted away from the CIA to the White House and Colson. This memo went to Helms, whose initials appear on it. Colson's lawyer, Ken Adams, said that Williams asked things in the civil suit depositions that he could only have learned from Bennett. For example, Adams said that Williams' first question to Hunt was whether Hunt had gone to Chappaquiddick to interview DeMott. Colson had testified about this before the grand jury but does not believe Williams got it from Silbert or Glanzer.

Colson referred to a list of Plumbers activities which had been shown to him by the FBI. The memo/list was dated August 31-71 and listed the projects which were being undertaken by the plumbers. One item had been blacked out. At the point Colson's lawyers told the FBI that Colson was a defendant in the case, the FBI withdrew the document and terminated the interview. Colson's lawyer made handwritten notes of the list which he will supply to me.

Sens. Weicker inquired of Colson's knowledge of meetings in Mardian's operation in the Internal Security division at Justice. Colson believed the CIA was into the operation, particularly pre-convention time -- funnelling information to Mardian. Colson referred to the July 11 and 12, 1971 San Clemente meetings where Mardian flew out with Dean Ehrlichman called Colson and told him a special unit was being set up headed by Krogh and that Hunt was to be detailed to it. Krogh brought Eddy into operation. Files show CIA was making information concerning radicals available to Krogh and Mardian.

Colson mentioned the name of A.J. Wellston Smyth(?), who was a friend of Shapiro's and had advance knowledge of the Watergate

break-in. Colson said Smyth had done some debugging work for him (this may need clarification).

Colson said Seymour Hush had the CIA story plus much more back in January of 1974. Hush called Colson and told him that Colby had spent two hours in his office confirming everything. This was during the time of the meetings Colson was having with Haig and Buzhardt.

Colson said he could go through the Helm's testimony at this confirmation hearings and show where he committed perjury.

Colson said he was with Kissinger on June 14, at 8:00 A.M. after the Pentagon Papers broke. Colson said his log's show he was with Kissinger on Tuesday the 15th and he is sure he was with Kissinger on Monday. Colson said Kissinger was going through the ceiling that Kissinger was almost irrational. Colson feels that there is something more deep and personal to Henry Kissinger than the covers which were blown by the leak. Colson also told of Kissinger's close relationship with Rockefeller and Kissinger's use of Rockefeller's facilities in conducting secret negotiations. Kissinger was consulting Rocky in this area. Colson at this time was conducting domestic negotiations for Kissinger.