

From: Pete Kinsey

1-27-75

Subject: Meeting with Charles Colson on January 13, 1975

On January 13, 1975 Senator Wicker and I met with Charles W. Colson in the office of the U.S. Marshall in the Federal court House, Washington, D.C. Mr. Colson was accompanied by his attorney, Kenneth b. Adams of the firm of Dickstein, Shapiro & Morin.

LW explained that he was interested in certain aspects of the CIA and its operations. Colson (CC) replied that he had earlier appeared before the Nedzi Committee to discuss his knowledge of CIA activities (presumably vis-a-vis Ellsberg/Watergate). CC indicated that he had earlier declined

to appear because he had not been sentenced, but relented when pressed by

Nedzi to appear. CC indicated his appearance lasted about an hour and that as soon as he began discussing substantive incidents of CIA activities Nedzi adjourned the meeting. CC believed Nedzi is clearly in the CIA's pocket. (He also feels that while Stennis is not in the CIA's pocket, he is unwittingly being duped.)

CC indicated that he was concerned over CIA relationships and infiltration into private enterprise and cited a number of examples:

~~Paul~~ Paul
Tany O'Brien's law firm is on retainer to the CIA. The firm maintains an overseas office with one member a full-time CIA type.

Mullen & Co (Washington PR firm headed formerly by Robert Bennett) was on retainer to Howard Hughes operation, which has definite CIA ties. Bennett's firm replaced Maheau ~~XXXX~~ when Maheau was fired. Maheau also had CIA ties.

Hughes is into Glomar Enterprises which is engaged in ocean floor exploration. The company's ship was financed and built by the CIA.

Psychological Assessment Inc., a private Washington psychological testing firm acting as a CIA cover. Firm gave CIA access to thousands of psychological profiles. CC indicated that CIA had admitted its involvement in this firm but that it is now defunct.

Howard Hunt

CC stated that Hunt was one of six named he gave to Haldeman. CC picked Hunt because of his knowledge of foreign affairs and political astuteness. Hunt was working for Mullen&Co but CC was unaware of the company's ties with the CIA. CC stated that Bob Bennett had been around for several months offering assistance to the White House and pushing Hunt on Colson and that when Colson was looking for someone, Hunt's name naturally came to mind. Colson further stated that Hunt had recruited the Cubans in April of 1971, which was four months before Colson brought Hunt on-board at the White House in July.

Colson stated that Hunt was receiving assistance from and dealing with the CIA up to the day of the Watergate and in this regard, at least, Bob Cushman did not tell the truth. Also, ^{Richard Helms} ~~Cushman~~ on several occasions received packages from Hunt which he then passed onto Richard Helms. Colson indicated he did not know the contents of the packages. Colson stated that on one occasion Hunt told him that his financial problems were solved in that Helms had given him \$20,000 to take care of medical expenses for his sick daughter. Hunt also told Colson that Helms was a great guy.

Colson speculated that Hunt may have been serving two masters when the Watergate break-in occurred. Colson and Dean had queried Magruder as to why Spencer Oliver Jr.'s phone had been tapped as well as O'Brien's. Magruder answered that he did not know why inasmuch as Oliver's phone was not the target of the bugging operation. Colson then raised the fact that Spencer Oliver Senior was on the Hughes payroll and that when Maheu was fired, ^{Larry P.R.} O'Brien's ^{Hughes} firm lost its retainer to Mullen&Company (?). According to Hunt's book, Colson stated that Oliver Junior had been with the CIA.

Colson mentioned ^e the name Mroton Jackson and identified him as a Los Angeles attorney. He said Hunt contacted Jackson the morning before the Fielding break-in. According to Colson, the Greenspan break-in was planned in Jackson's house, ^{Hunt stayed with Jackson} at the time he was ordered out of the country. According to Colson, Jackson has never been interviewed.

Lucien Conein

Colson stated that he had come across Conein through Howard K. Smith of ABC. Conein's name had not surfaced in the course of the Pentagon Papers affair. Smith had called Colson regarding the Pentagon Papers and certain "missing cables." Smith had discovered Conein who had been the CIA chief operative in Saigon during the Diem coup. When Bill Gill of ABC was about to interview Conein, he (Gill) got a call from Henry Kissinger who told him to stay away from Conein as he was involved in matters of international security. Smith called Colson to find out what was going on. Colson told Ehrlichman about it, who in turn told Colson to have Hunt interview Conein to find out what he knew. Hunt found Conein ^{just after Conein had been given \$500} in a McLean, Virginia shopping center, ~~just before Conein had been given \$500 cash and plane ticket by the CIA.~~ Hunt interviewed Conein in Ehrlichman's office after the Secret Service had installed a tape recorder under a couch (Jack Caufield was requested to arrange the installation.) Hunt knew that Conein was a heavy drinker and Colson had had his secretary obtain a bottle of scotch for the meeting. With the tape recorder installed, Hunt did not have to worry about taking notes or how much liquor he himself put down. Apparently both Conein and Hunt got pretty well smashed ^{and} Conein talked at length in detail. The only problem was that Hunt was sitting on the ~~where the tape recorder was placed so the machine did not work.~~ After the interview when this was discovered, Colson said he poured black coffee down Hunt to sober him up and then tried to reconstruct what Conein had said. They could not reconstruct everything, which prompted the phone call by Hunt and Colson (using the name R Fred Charles) the following day (July 7, 1971).

Colson stated that he saw Conein in December of 1971 just before Conein was to be interviewed by CBS. In the interview, Conein did not reveal nearly any of the detail that he had in his discussions with Hunt. The CIA was still apparently displeased that he had done the

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Hunt claims to have shown Conein the forged cables relating to the Diem coup. Colson doubts that he did owing to the fact it would have been against Colson's explicit instructions. Conein denies that he ever saw the cables.

Colson speculated on Kissinger's touchiness on the subject of Conein. Conein was the View Nam specialist still with the CIA. The CIA was afraid of Conein in that it did not want to take the rap for some of Conein's past activities.

Colson stated that he was involved in Conein going over to DEA. He believes that there is a memo to Ehrlichman in the White House file concerning Conein going over to DEA. He believes Conein was sponsored in the regard by Hunt who wanted to keep Conein around in the government in case more information was needed. Colson thought the arrangements may have been worked out by Bud Krogh, who was responsible for setting up the interagency coordination between DEA & CIA. Krogh was heavily involved in this area and made several trips to southeast Asia paid for by the CIA. (At the time, Krogh was also a member of the White House Plumbers operation, according to Colson.) The idea was for BNDD (now DEA) to be able to utilize the CIA's overseas intelligence capabilities.

Colson also believes that the CIA, through DEA, is engaged in "special projects." He mentioned a person who had "mysteriously disappeared," but said he could not discuss it now.

Robert Bennett

Colson stated that Bennett took over Mullen & Co. after the 1970 elections but that he has since left and is now working for Howard Hughes. Colson said that every one of Hunt's capers was a Bennett's suggestion. He said there was extensive information about Bennett in the CIA file given to Baker and Ervin.

Under the arrangements, Mullen & Co reported to a CIA case officer who reported to a man named Eric Isenstead who, according to Colson, is chief of the COA's central cover staff which sets off private firms as

covers for the agency. Isenstead reports directly to the Deputy Director for Plans. According to Colson, we should take a close look at Isenstead since, if there is domestic intelligence activity, it is through Isenstead.

Colson mentioned that when Bennett went before the Watergate grand jury the prosecutors were told not to question him. Colson believes the fix was put in by the CIA, which also picked up half of Bennett's legal fees. According to Colson, Bennett had advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in but was ~~is~~ cleared by the CIA 10 days after it ~~was~~ occurred. He also noted that ^{Paul} Larry O'Brien got immunity. In other words, Colson was saying, all the CIA types dropped out of sight.

Colson said that Bennett's retainer to ^u Hughes ~~was~~ was controlled by the CIA. At Hughes' suggestion, Bennett provided the lawyer for Dita Beard. Bennett proposed to Hunt that Hunt go to Denver to interview Dita. As Colson sees it, Bennett was ~~xxxx~~ not so much worried about the Beard memo as he was about certain memos relating to the CIA & ITT. According to Colson, the CIA did a number of illegal things in the United States to further the private interests of ITT ^{well} ~~xxxx~~ as was as for foreign intelligence purposes. Colson said that he could not go into areas which were classified, eg. the Chilean affair and the use of federal agencies to advance private interests where a commonality of interest existed. Colson (said) that the things the CIA did during Watergate were highly classified and that there were bits and pieces of them in the CIA file given to Baker and Ervin. Colson ~~is~~ stated that he could probably summarize the contents of the file after reviewing his notes. He did recall the file mentioned radical activities prior to the convention. Colson said that it has lots of cash which it uses to finance projects by ~~is~~ procuring outside people rather than CIA agents. This makes it ~~almost~~ almost impossible to trace the threads.

Colson stated that the ^u Hughes empire and the CIA have a continuing strong relationship. ~~is~~ If the CIA wants to do something but does not want its name on it, it turns it over to the ~~is~~ Hughes operation. Hughes ^g nets money and the CIA ^h gets put into foreign and domestic intelligence

The "Committee of 40" was a joke since Kissinger was running the CIA single handedly. Apparently Kissinger despised Helms but tolerated him perhaps, as Colson speculates, because Helms had something on Kissinger and Nixon. Colson also said he had told the prosecutors about Angleton some time ago, but that they would not listen to him.

Colson said there is an area of CIA which places CIA types into all sensitive federal agencies. These individuals are not always known to the agencies. Colson said this was different from the DEA situation where there is a separate entity in the CIA working on international narcotics traffic. He said that Krogh would probably be reluctant to discuss the CIA/DEA matter. (Colson mentioned Jeff Donfeld and I mention Walt Minnick, both of whom worked for Krogh.)

Colson also said that Ambrose would ~~probably~~ probably be ~~the type~~ ^{the type} would set up the CIA in DEA. He also said that there were certain mafia figures who had ~~cordial~~ cordial relations with Ambrose.

Colson also mentioned Pennington who was the one who burned McCord's files after the break-in and who died of a heart attack six months ago. When the FBI queried the CIA about Pennington, the CIA gave the FBI another Pennington thus throwing the FBI off of about a year. Colson also mentioned the fact that Angleton had had contact with Hunt while Hunt was in the White House.

Colson believes both Helms ~~and~~ and Cushman perjured themselves before the Senate citing Helms' confirmation hearings for his ambassadorship and his testimony before Baker. He said Helms in his testimony boasted of the CIA's intelligence ~~files~~ files and that the FBI came to the CIA ~~for~~ names because the CIA had a better retrieval system.

The meeting, which began at 2:00 p.m., adjourned at 4:15 p.m. A second meeting was arranged for Monday, January 20, at 10:30 a.m.