

Hunt Tried to Probe Sen. Kennedy's Life

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2/10/73

During the same month that Watergate bugging conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. started work as a White House consultant, he traveled to Providence, R.I., under an assumed name and tried to recruit a government employee to investigate the private life of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Clifton DeMotte, the government employee said yesterday in a telephone interview that he met Hunt, who used the alias Edward Warren, in a Providence motel for a two-hour, tape-recorded interview sometime in July, 1971.

Hunt has said in a sworn statement that he began working at the White House for special counsel to the President Charles W. Colson "on or about July 6, 1971." The White House said at the time of the Watergate bugging last June that Hunt worked on declassifying the Pentagon Papers and on narcotics intelligence.

DeMotte, who has been familiar with the Kennedy family's activities in Massachusetts for more than a decade, dating to a time when he worked in Hyannis Port, said Hunt asked him about various activities of Kennedy, including the 1969 Chappaquiddick automobile accident.

"Hunt, using the name Ed Warren, wanted to know if I'd heard of any women-chasing

by the Kennedy boys . . . if I'd heard of any scandal-type material," DeMotte said yesterday.

"I think this (the interview) was a prelude to embark on a major campaign against Kennedy," DeMotte said. "It was a recruiting campaign. He

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SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY
... object of research

WATERGATE, From A1

wanted me to do work on Chappaquiddick . . . he offered to pay only expenses."

DeMotte said he turned Hunt down, and that he repeatedly asked Hunt who he was working for and Hunt would only say that he was working for "a group" that he refused to identify.

Federal sources said DeMotte gave essentially the same account of Hunt's visit to the FBI.

DeMotte said that he could not remember the exact day Hunt tried to recruit him but recalled that it was during July, 1971, but after July 4, 1971.

At the time, Kennedy was generally considered by the White House to be the strongest possible contender against President Nixon in the 1972 election. The Washington Post reported last July that it had been told by White House employees that Hunt was working there on Kennedy research late in the summer of 1971.

During the Watergate trial last month, in which Hunt pleaded guilty to all charges against him, extensive evidence was introduced to show that Edward Warren was the

alias Hunt used during the Watergate conspiracy.

DeMotte's statement is the first indication that Hunt was using that name almost a year before the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in.

DeMotte said that he did not realize that "Ed Warren" was Hunt until he was contacted by the FBI last year about several phone calls Hunt had made to him. He said he identified Hunt through pictures.

DeMotte, 41, was public relations director of the Yachtsman Motor Inn in Hyannis Port, in 1960 when the late President Kennedy used the hotel as a press and staff headquarters for the presidential campaign.

DeMotte is now a GS-12 federal employee for the General Services Administration whose job is to dispose of excess government property at a Navy construction battalion center in Davisville, R.I.

DeMotte said he had no first-hand information to give Hunt on the Kennedys, but that he did provide "information on hell-raising" by staff members.

In addition, DeMotte said that he had "strictly hearsay" information on the Kennedys themselves involving "real

swinging parties" and "booze"—that he gave to Hunt.

DeMotte said he tried to "persuade Hunt that it was a waste of time to come up, but he insisted." He described Hunt as someone who appeared to be "either dedicated to the country, the 'group' or himself—I couldn't tell which."

Last summer The Post reported that three sources said Hunt showed a special interest in Kennedy's Chappaquiddick accident as far back as the summer of 1971. Jane F. Schleicher, a White House librarian, said Hunt checked out "a whole bunch of material" on Kennedy and the 1969 accident in which Mary Jo Kopechne, a passenger in Kennedy's car, was killed.

The White House has denied that Hunt was doing Kennedy research as part of his official duties as a \$100-a-day consultant. A spokesman last July noted that he was the author of some 40 books and "could have been doing research on his own." Reliable White House and federal sources have said that Hunt also investigated for the White House leaks to the news media.

Hunt's other job in 1971-72 was as a writer at the Robert R. Mullen & Co. public relation firm, 1700 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Robert F. Bennett, president of the Mullen firm and the person who suspended Hunt from his job after his name was linked to the June 17, 1972, Watergate break-in, has said that Hunt was not doing Kennedy research as part of his public relations assignments.

Included in material Hunt checked out of the White House library was a book called "Bridge at Chappaquiddick," by Jack Olson.

In the telephone interview yesterday, DeMotte said Hunt had asked him to read the Olson book, DeMotte said he then read it, and Hunt called him to see if the book jarred his memory on any significant details about Kennedy or Chappaquiddick Island, where the automobile accident occurred. He said it did not.

DeMotte said that some time after the 1969 Chappaquiddick accident, he went to John Volpe, who was then Secretary of Transportation, to speak about the Kennedys.

At the time, DeMotte was working in the congressional relations office of the Department of Transportation.

"I thought maybe I had

some information," DeMotte said. "We met for maybe a half-hour and he pretty much felt I was wasting his time."

DeMotte said he and Hunt talked from 5:15 to 7:30 p.m. in the Providence motel room rented by Hunt, and had sup-

per and a drink. "Hunt was dressed in sport clothes," DeMotte said, "a hell of a James Bond operator." tor."

After their meeting, DeMotte said, "I spent a restless night and tried to find him the next morning for a cup of coffee, but he was gone."

Federal sources have said that an intelligence-gathering operation that was being run by Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, a former White House aide and coconspirator in the Watergate bugging case, involved—among other things—collecting data on the personal lives of Democratic presidential contenders.

In a sworn deposition taken Aug. 29, 1972, in the Democratic Party's \$3.2 million civil suit arising out of the Watergate bugging, Hunt's attorney objected to the attempts by the Democrats' attorney to ask Hunt about Kennedy.

According to the transcript, Hunt's attorney, William O. Bittman, said it was "outrageous" and an attempt to "sensationalize this case" by interjecting Kennedy's name.

The following took place after Edward Bennett Williams, the Democrats' attorney, asked: "While you were working with Mr. Colson, Mr. Hunt, did you do research on Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts?"

Mr. Bittman: "I object to the question and instruct him not to answer it. Again, I do not see how that question can be in any way whatsoever relevant to this lawsuit. It strains my imagination to believe that that kind of question can be relevant, and I assume that the only reason it is being interjected into this proceeding is that at some point, hopefully, to sensationalize this case beyond its present posture, Mr. Williams."

Mr. Williams: "No, it is not, Mr. Bittman. This case does not need to be sensationalized, and I do not want you to impugn my motives any more. I have not done that with you. I said what you were doing had the effect of obstructing the orderly processes of these de-

positions. I did not impugn your motives.

"I do not enjoy your impugning my motives, and I do not want you to do it again in the course of these depositions or ever after."

Mr. Bittman: "Mr. Williams, I will make whatever statements I believe are appropriate on this record, and I will not let you intimidate me.

"I believe the interjecting of Sen. Kennedy into this proceeding is outrageous. It cannot be possibly relevant in any way whatsoever, and on behalf

of my client I will make whatever objection I think is appropriate, and I am sorry that you take offense to it."

Mr. Williams: "You decline to answer the question, is that correct, Mr. Hunt?"

Mr. Hunt: "I decline to answer the question on the advice of counsel."

The relationship between Hunt and Colson has been the subject of a number of apparently contradictory statements. Both men confirm that they have been good friends for several years.

Last June 19, when Hunt was first linked to the bugging, the White House personnel office identified Hunt as a consultant to Colson, who has been one of Mr. Nixon's most powerful advisers and who is leaving the White House next month for private law practice.

Within hours after the personnel office's statement, official White House spokesmen said that Hunt had been hired on Colson's recommendation but that he did not work for Colson. Hunt's work, the spokesmen said, dealt with the Pentagon Papers and narcotics intelligence.

In a sworn deposition taken last summer and made public this week, Colson said it was his idea to bring Hunt to the White House and that Hunt worked for him for several weeks.

Hunt said in his own deposition that he worked for Colson the entire nine months of his White House stay.