

Hunt Says Colson Gave Cable Order

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— Convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt has testified secretly that former White House special counsel Charles W. Colson personally ordered that phony State Department cables be prepared in 1971 linking the Kennedy administration with the assassination of South Vietnam President Ngo Dinh Diem in September, 1963.

The counterfeit cables were drafted and passed along as authentic to a reporter by Hunt, who was later convicted in the Watergate scandal and implicated in a burglary connected to the Pentagon Papers case.

These disclosures, further implicating high government officials in alleged wrongdoing long before the break-in of Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex, were contained in a transcript of Hunt's testimony last week before a federal grand jury in Washington made available today to the defense in the Pentagon Papers trial.

Using a White House Xerox machine, a razor blade and a typewriter, Hunt prepared two phony cables to look like official State Department documents, using the experience he said he gained as an ex-CIA agent on several occasions, "floating forged newspaper accounts, telegrams, that sort of thing."

In Washington, Colson denied having told Hunt to "falsify any documents."

The seven-page section was released by trial Judge W. Matt Byre Jr., who last Friday released the first 29 pages of Hunt's testimony, in which Hunt revealed an elaborate CIA-assisted scheme leading to the burglary of the office of co-defendant Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

Today's Hunt disclosure related solely to the bogus

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cables. But, in another document Byrne made available to the defense, former White House Aide Egil Krogh threw additional light on the burglary scheme.

Krogh said in an affidavit to Byrne and the Justice Department that the burglary grew out of direct orders from resigned White House domestic affairs chief John Ehrlichman in July, 1971, authorizing "covert activity" to compile a "psychological history" on Ellsberg.

Krogh said the special White House "plumbers" squad was assigned to the task because of a growing fear within the administration that unauthorized leaks were endangering national security and that Ellsberg's psychiatric file might divulge the names of alleged co-conspirators.

Krogh said that the concern was so great that President Nixon personally told him, in Ehrlichman's presence, "to move ahead with the greatest urgency to determine the source of leaks." Krogh in no way implied, however, that the President at any time knew about the burglary prior to

the time it was brought to his attention last month.

Krogh also noted that the White House unit was chosen over the FBI for the special Ellsberg "job" because the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had "a close personal relationship" with Ellsberg's father-in-law Louis Marx, a retired California toy manufacturer. Krogh added that Hoover approved of the special probe in a memorandum.

In Washington, an FBI spokesman said the Bureau is unable to confirm or deny Krogh's statement, because it has not located any document establishing Hoover's acquiescence in the White House probe.

Hunt's grand jury testimony described how, around the time the Ellsberg psychological profile was being discussed, he was also going through hundreds of State Department cables, comparing them with what appeared in the Pentagon Papers leaked by Ellsberg.

Hunt said he noticed a gap in the cables around the period of Diem's overthrow, and subsequently confirmed that neither the Pentagon nor the CIA had the missing copies of the missing material.

He informed Colson, for whom he was working on a part-time basis and whose recommendation landed him the job with the "plumbers squad." Colson resigned as White House special counsel early this year.

Hunt told Colson that, "in my opinion a lot of stuff that should have been there had been extracted."

The following conversation ensued, according to Hunt's testimony:

Colson: How do you account for that (the missing cables)?

Hunt: Well, some of the cables that they still have on hand at the Department of State have been sent, with date stamps, saying photographed or duplicated for the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library . . . Well, obviously anybody who had been given access to the . . . file for the purpose of incorporating them into material held by the JFK library would also have had opportunity to remove any cables that could have been embarrassing to the Kennedy legates.

Colson: What kind of material have you dug up on

the files that would indicate Kennedy complicity?"

(Here, Hunt said he showed Colson three or four cables that indicated the administration "had pretty close to pulled the trigger against Premier Diem's head, but it didn't say so in so many words.")

Colson: Well, this isn't good enough. Do you think that you could improve on them?

Hunt: Yes, I probably could, but not without technical assistance. ("After all," Hunt told the grand jury, "I had been given some training in my past CIA career to do just this sort of thing and had done it successfully on numerous occasions, floating forged newspaper accounts, telegrams, that sort of thing.")

Colson: Well, we won't be able to give you any technical help. This is too hot. See what you can do on your own.

Hunt said he set out to do just that "with the very meager means at my disposal"—namely the White House Xerox, a razor blade and a typewriter.

"The process was relatively simple," he testified. "I first of all prepared a cable text. In other words, from many of those cables, I could pretty well adjust the text to the type of language that would be used by the man who was the ostensible originator, and altered these, from time to time, until I was satisfied that I had two creditable cables."

Hunt said he used signatures of the releasing reviewing officers and the time-date stamp—from previous cables "and simply by Xeroxing and re-Xeroxing, I substituted a text for what had previously been a legitimate cable and could use those."

Hunt was unhappy with his work, particularly because he could not get access to the same type face used by the State Department, but Colson liked them. But, said Hunt, "They could never be published, because after the Alger Hiss case, everyone was type-writer conscious."

"So," he added, "There would just have to be a fast-brush show on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, which I began to believe was the purpose Mr. Colson had in mind."

Soon after completing the cables, someone, apparently Colson, sent Time-Life reporter William Lambert

over, with instructions to Hunt, "If you want to show him, show them to him, up in your office at the White House, if you want. But don't let them get out of your hands."

Colson, responding in Washington to questions about Hunt's testimony, said in his statement: "I have just read excerpts of Mr. Hunt's testimony before the grand jury. I did not order Mr. Hunt at any time to falsify any documents. From what I have read of Mr. Hunt's statements it is entirely possible that Mr. Hunt misunderstood something I said to him at the time he was reviewing Pentagon Paper cables with me. It has been widely reported that I would not let Mr. Lambert use the information allegedly given to him and that I actively attempted to discourage him from pursuing the story. Such action is inconsistent with orders on my part to falsify anything."

Lambert, "Exultant" over the cables, Hunt said, copied them on a yellow pad. Lambert revealed recently that he spent a year trying to verify the phony cables, but could not.

Hunt gave no indication what purpose Colson hoped to serve by leaking the phony cables. But other sources have suggested that it was part of an emerging White House strategy to discredit potential 1972 Democratic Party opponents of Mr. Nixon, among whom at the time, was one of the "legatees," Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), whose older brother John was President when Diem was assassinated.

From the bogus cable job, Hunt went to work for Krogh and his special investigation into security leaks. In his affidavit, Krogh said that on or about July 15, 1971, he was given oral instructions by Ehrlichman to begin the project "to determine the causes, sources and ramifications of the unauthorized disclosures of classified documents known as the Pentagon Papers."

Krogh said he was informed by the FBI that the Soviet embassy in Washington had a copy of the Pentagon Papers before they were published in The New York Times. He also referred to a news story on Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the Soviet Union; another story on Aug. 12, 1971, regarding a Soviet move to

avert a war by entering into a pact with India, and a report from the CIA that the life of one of its agents had been jeopardized by a news story.

After the SALT story, Krogh said he "was personally instructed by President Nixon, in the presence of John D. Ehrlichman, that the continuing 'leaks' of vital information were compromising the national security of the United States, and the President instructed (Krogh) to move ahead with the greatest urgency to determine the source of 'leaks.'"

Ehrlichman gave approval for "covert activity" to Krogh, who put the burglary machinery into motion. But it was not until afterward, according to Krogh, that Ehrlichman learned from him that the special unit had resorted to a break-in.

Ehrlichman, Krogh said, "advised... that the activity on the second trip to California far exceeded the scope of any covert activity which had been approved in general in advance," and told Krogh to tell Hunt and team-member G. Gordon Liddy to cease any further "covert activity."

Krogh said that as far as he knew the CIA was unavailable for the burglary operation because it lacked jurisdiction within the United States. But, he noted two pages later that certain films taken by Hunt and Liddy from the building housing Dr. Lewis Fielding's (the psychiatrist's) office were left in a camera belonging to the CIA and "transmitted to the Dept. of Justice by the Central Intelligence Agency."

In his testimony, Hunt said the CIA had been involved from the beginning, providing cameras, equipment, disguises and false papers to Hunt, Liddy, Bernard Barker and two Cubans who constituted the burglary team.

Telephone Number Linked to Segretti

California lawyer Donald Segretti, who reportedly conducted a widespread campaign of political sabotage and espionage, used an East St. Louis, Ill., telephone answering service as a link in his spying operation, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported yesterday.

The newspaper reported

that James Robert Norton of Los Angeles, a college friend of Segretti, established an account at the Alert Answering Service for the first three months of 1972.

The Post-Dispatch said Eric Wuennenberg, a University of Wisconsin student, was approached by a Segretti coworker and asked to do political spying. The newspaper said Wuennenberg was told he could contact Segretti through the East St. Louis number.

Norton acknowledged setting up the account, but would say no more, the Post-Dispatch reported.