

Colson Asks For Pardon From Ford

By Jules Witcover
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Former White House special counsel Charles W. Colson, serving a 1-to-3-year prison term for obstruction of justice, has asked President Ford for a pardon, the White House reported yesterday.

Colson thus became the first major Watergate figure to request a presidential pardon in the period after Mr. Ford granted one Sept. 8 to Colson's former boss, ex-President Nixon. The White House has said all pardons will be considered on an individual basis.

Colson culminated intensive plea-bargaining with the office of Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski in June by pleading guilty to spreading derogatory information about Daniel Ellsberg in 1971 after Ellsberg had leaked the Pentagon Papers. In return, Jaworski dropped charges against Colson in the White House "plumbers" and Watergate cover-up prosecutions.

Deputy White House press secretary John W. Hushen said a petition for pardon in Colson's behalf was mailed to the White House in the first week after Mr. Ford granted a full pardon to former President Nixon. It was sent to the Justice Department for review by Lawrence Traylor, the department's pardon attorney.

Traylor's sole function is to assess requests for executive clemency or pardon by gathering all available information and drafting a letter for the signature of the Attorney General making a recommendation for the President. Hushen said, Traylor said last night, however, he had not yet received Colson's request from the White House.

Under usual Justice Department procedure, Traylor said, no individual convicted is eligible for pardon until three years after sentencing or after he has been out of prison three years. Traylor said that under the rules, Colson's application would be rejected for failure to meet the three-year eligibility requirement. However, he said, the Attorney General could request a waiver of the waiting period.

At the White House yester-



CHARLES W. COLSON
... serving jail term

day, the Nixon pardon and associated arrangements continued to raise questions. President Ford's new press secretary got plenty of them but had few answers concerning congressional reaction to the pardon and the accompanying agreements to send Mr. Nixon his White House tape recordings and \$850,000 in transition money.

Ron Nessen the press secretary, said "no decision has been made" on how Mr. Ford will respond to a Capitol Hill request that he explain his reasons for the pardon. Nessen said it was premature to inquire whether the President planned to invoke executive privilege for the first time.

A spokesman for Rep. William L. Hungate (D-Mo.), chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee inquiring into the Nixon pardon, said Mr.

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Ford had sought and received a 24-hour extension yesterday to provide an answer. A previous brief letter from the President, with news clippings attached, was judged unsatisfactory by the subcommittee.

Asked whether Mr. Ford would oppose legislation that would abrogate the agreement whereby the tapes are to be shipped to California and kept under Mr. Nixon's control, the press secretary said, "The question of the tapes is in the legislative process. I think we'll have to wait and see what Congress comes out with."

Finally, Nessen was unable to say whether the President personally approved of his own administration's request to Congress for \$850,000 in transition and other expenses for Mr. Nixon. Nessen sought to emphasize that the agreement on the expense payments was negotiated and the money was requested by the General Services Administration, with "transmittal to Congress from the White House."

But asked specifically whether the President personally approved it, he said: "I don't know whether he personally approved it or not. I have no reason to suspect one way or the other on that. But it was sent to the Hill over his name in his official capacity. Obviously it's got his name on it."

The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday cut the \$850,000 request by more than half, to \$398,000, and yesterday a Senate Appropriations subcommittee trimmed it to \$328,000. One of the cuts was maid and butler service.

[United Press International reported that according to an administration source Mr. Nixon was "very irritated" by what he considered a "begrudging attitude" to give him the special privileges accorded other former Presidents. "He feels everyone is giving him a hard time," UPI reported the source as saying. Mr. Nixon was particularly upset that authorities at the Marine Corps base at Camp Pendleton, Calif., near his San Clemente home, had only "grudgingly" given him permission to use the golf course there, UPI said.]

Nessen did confirm a published report he would neither confirm nor deny the day before—that President Ford is nominating career Foreign Service officer David K. E. Bruce to be U.S. ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to succeed Donald Rumsfeld, who is coming to the White House as Mr. Ford's chief staff coordinator. Bruce has been chief of the U.S. liaison office in Peking since May, 1973, and is a former ambassador to Great Britain, West Germany and France.