

Colson's Name Crops Up

By Edward Walsh

Washington Post Staff Writer

Charles W. Colson brought, in his own words, his "good friend" E. Howard Hunt Jr. to the White House in 1971, and, with that as a start, Colson's name has cropped up several times during the unfolding of the Watergate scandal.

Colson, President Nixon's former special counsel who resigned from the White House staff in March to return to private law practice in Washington, asked Hunt to become a \$100-a-day consultant at the White House. He also recommended to John D. Ehrlichman, the President's former chief domestic adviser, and Henry Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's top foreign policy adviser, that the White House hire the former CIA agent.

Hunt is one of the seven

convicted Watergate bugging conspirators. Through him, first Ehrlichman and now Colson have been tied to other undercover activities allegedly conducted with the approval of high-ranking White House officials.

The latest disclosure came yesterday at the Pentagon Papers trial in Los Angeles, where a portion of Hunt's testimony to the Watergate grand jury in Washington was released. In the testimony, Hunt said he discussed with Colson the fabrication of State Department cables so as to implicate President John F. Kennedy in the 1963 political assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

Hunt testified that he showed the phony cables to Colson and that "he seemed to like them . . ."

The false cables were among Hunt's documents that were destroyed last summer by then acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray, according to FBI and other sources. Gray was told by Ehrlichman and former White House counsel John W. Dean III that the documents should "never see the light of day," the sources said.

Colson's name first came up two days after the break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters last June 17 when Hunt's name was found in the address book of one of the five men arrested inside the Watergate. When Washington Post Staff Writer Bob Woodward called Hunt's office, the White House switchboard operator said he was not in, and added: "There's one other place he might be, in Mr. Colson's office."

In a sworn statement given last August to Democratic Party lawyers in connection with a civil lawsuit growing out of the Watergate bugging, Colson described how Hunt came to be hired as a White House consultant beginning on July 6, 1971.

Colson said he first met Hunt, a fellow alumnus of Brown University, in the 1950s and had been friendly with him throughout the 1960s. He sought out Hunt to work for the White House, Colson said, in June 1971, when newspapers were publishing the secret Pentagon Papers.

Hunt was hired to work on "this particular Pentagon Papers controversy," Colson testified, after he (Colson) and Ehrlichman "conferred by telephone."

Colson was asked by Dem-

Often in Watergate Affair

ocratic Party lawyers whether Hunt was hired "to make inquiry into the source of the leak of the Pentagon Papers" to newspapers. Colson replied, "No," and added:

"Well, the first job, or one of the first jobs, was to find out what the Pentagon Papers consisted of, and research into the completeness, the accuracy, the authenticity, the facts as reported, the completeness.

"Related to that, obviously, were the security questions of how the papers and the documents had gotten out."

In grand jury testimony released recently, Hunt described how the Pentagon Papers project led to the 1971 burglary of the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg, one of the defendants in the Pentagon Papers trial. The testimony did not implicate Colson.

Colson has denied any knowledge or involvement in the Watergate bugging incident. In early April he took a lie detector test that he said supported his statements that he had no advance knowledge of the bugging.

Colson took the lie detector test after James W. McCord, one of the convicted Watergate conspirators, reportedly told the Senate select committee investigating the incident that he received "second-hand information" that Colson knew in advance that the Democratic headquarters were to be placed under illegal electronic surveillance.

On April 30, The Washington Post, quoting reliable sources, reported that two top officials of the Nixon re-election campaign had told federal prosecutors that Colson knew of the Watergate

bugging plans and urged that the illegal electronic surveillance be expedited.

Other Watergate-related reports involving Colson include:

- Last January, Colson warned President Nixon that persons in his administration were obstructing justice in connection with the Watergate case and that action should be taken against them, according to sources in the executive branch. Colson denied that he had warned the President.

- Phillip Joanou, former executive vice president of the group that handled the Nixon re-election committee's advertising, has said that Colson "initiated the idea and wrote the copy" for a newspaper advertisement that purported to be a citizens' group effort in support of Mr. Nixon's decision to mine Haiphong harbor in May, 1972.

- Federal investigators told The Post last summer that Colson directed an extensive "dirty tricks" operation of political sabotage against Democratic candidates in the 1972 presidential primaries and general election campaigns.

Colson has also been in the forefront of administration critics of The Washington Post's reporting of the Watergate scandal.

In November, 1972, Colson told a meeting of the Society of New England Editors that The Post's Watergate reporting was "unconscionable" and that its impact was to "erode somewhat public confidence in the institutions of government."

"The charge of subverting the whole political process," Colson said, "is a fantasy, a work of fiction rivaling only 'Gone With the Wind' in circulation and 'Portnoy's Complaint' for indecency."