

# Colson Confession On Chappaquiddick



**Jack Anderson**

**T**HE WHITE HOUSE financed a trip to New England by waterbugger E. Howard Hunt to investigate Senator Edward Kennedy's role in the Chappaquiddick tragedy, according to Charles Colson, who ordered the mission.

The former White House aide confessed his part in the snooping operation during a secret deposition taken May 28 by lawyers for the Democratic National Committee.

Colson told under oath how Hunt came to him in July, 1971, with a tip that a policeman, identified only as "Demott," had confidential information on the case.

Because Kennedy was a potential presidential contender, the White House was eager to learn more about the 1969 drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne during a drive with Kennedy.

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**C**OLSON instructed Hunt to interview the policeman whose information, said Colson, proved to be a rehash of published material. The White House paid Hunt's air fare either to Massachusetts or Rhode Island for the interview, Colson recalled.

The tough, glib Colson also admitted he had dispatched Hunt to Denver to question Dita Beard about her famous memo linking an ITT financial commitment to the Republicans with an advantageous anti-trust settlement. Hunt wore a preposter-

ous, ill-fitting red wig on this secret mission.

Colson conceded that he had worked, too, on an advertisement supporting President Nixon's decision to bomb and mine Haiphong harbor. The ad was signed by private citizens but paid out of campaign funds.

In his deposition, Colson also spoke fully for the first time of his mysterious "attack group," which worked out of the White House in 1972. Its job, he said, was to coordinate policy for surrogate candidates who were carrying the political attack to the Democrats.

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**C**OLSON vigorously denied he had advance knowledge of the Watergate break-in. The most he did, he said, was phone campaign deputy Jeb Magruder to arrange for the Watergate ringleaders, Howard Hunt and Gordon Liddy, to explain their intelligence plans. But Colson insisted he did this at Hunt's request and never learned the actual plans.

On balance, Colson denied more than he admitted. He flatly contradicted press reports that he had recruited men to pose as homosexuals in the McGovern campaign. He also denied knowing Hunt had once forged documents to show the late President John Kennedy had conspired to assassinate the late South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.