

# Colson Confirms Backing Kennedy Inquiry

## He Also Disputes Data Ey Ehrlichman and Dean

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Charles W. Colson, a former White House aide, confirmed today that he had authorized E. Howard Hunt Jr. to investigate activities of Senator Edward M. Kennedy during the summer of 1971.

But Mr. Colson denied that he had been aware that Hunt had sought and used Central Intelligence Agency disguises and other equipment for use in the project.

Thus, his story conflicts in one major respect to that of Hunt, who said yesterday that Mr. Colson had authorized him to interview a "Clifton Demotte" about possible scandalous information on Senator Kennedy and that Mr. Colson had known beforehand that he intended to use C.I.A. equipment in carrying out the assignment.

Mr. Colson gave an account of his role in the Kennedy investigation as he emerged after five hours of questioning by a House Armed Services subcommittee investigating C.I.A. involvement in the Watergate burglary.

### Something One Does

He dismissed the Kennedy matter as merely the kind of thing one does in the world of politics.

"When someone comes to you and offers information on a prospective opponent and you turn him down, either you are naive or you don't stay in politics very long," he said.

At that time, Senator Kennedy was considered high on the list of those who might capture the Democratic Presidential nomination a year later.

Hunt told the subcommittee yesterday that, with Mr. Colson's blessing, he had interviewed Mr. Demotte, a former resident of Hyannis Port, Mass., site of the Kennedy family compound, but found the information useless and dropped the matter.

Sources within the closed subcommittee session today described Mr. Colson's performance as virtually flawless, with no apparent holes in his repeated denials of any involvement in the Watergate affair.

Later, asked why his name "crops up so often" in Watergate accounts given by former White House colleagues, Mr. Colson smiled and replied: "It's an easy name to spell. Only five letters." Actually, his name has six letters.

While he was testifying, his month-old deposition in a suit by the Democratic National Committee was released upon being filed in Federal court.

Both in his subcommittee testimony and in his deposition, Mr. Colson indicated that John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon's former adviser on domestic matters, arranged for Hunt to obtain access to C.I.A. equipment in the summer of 1971.

This disputes Mr. Ehrlichman's denial that he had asked the C.I.A. to assist Hunt and confirms testimony of Gen. Robert A. Cushman, then the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Ehrlichman had called and asked him to give Hunt whatever assistance he needed.

Mr. Colson conceded that he had told Mr. Ehrlichman that Hunt wanted to establish liaison with the C.I.A. to investigate a security matter.

The witness testified that Mr. Ehrlichman told him, some days later, that he had called General Cushman and arranged for agency assistance to Hunt.

Mr. Colson also disputed another former White House colleague, John W. Dean 3d, who was ousted as counsel to the President on April 30.

Mr. Dean suggested to the Senate Watergate committee this week that Mr. Colson had been involved in a number of

"dirty tricks" and participated in the Watergate cover-up.

Commenting on lists of White House "enemies" and "political opponents" that Mr. Dean said had been prepared by Mr. Colson's office, Mr. Colson said they were merely guidance for invitations to White House social affairs and appointments to boards and commissions.

Mr. Colson denied that either he or his former assistant, the late George Bell, had written what he called the "defamatory remarks" beside 20 of the names on the "enemy list."

"It's not my language, it's not Bell's language," he said. "I resent it, and I hope Dean will tell the truth."

He said he did not know who had written the comments about the "20 enemies."

Mr. Colson also disputed a suggestion by Mr. Dean that he [Colson] had sought executive clemency for Hunt.

"I never talked to the President about executive clemency," Mr. Colson said.

Mr. Colson further denied that he had ordered Hunt to fake cables designed to implicate President Kennedy in the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam in 1963, or that he had ordered Hunt to check out the Milwaukee apartment of Arthur Bremer after the near-fatal shooting of Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama last year.

Hunt has said that Mr. Colson ordered him to fake the cables and ordered him to check the Bremer apartment.

Mr. Colson also denied a charge made yesterday by Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Republican of Connecticut, a member of the Watergate committee, that Mr. Colson had

tried to plant articles with newsmen that Senator Weicker was guilty of campaign irregularities and that he was thinking of switching parties.

Mr. Colson's deposition before the Democratic party's lawyers was recorded May 23. With a few exceptions, the major points in his account have since been made public in newspaper interviews.

### Idea Called Hunt's

The Kennedy inquiry, he said, was Hunt's idea. He said that in July, 1971, one of Hunt's public relations associates got a telephone call from "someone in Massachusetts" with unpublished information about the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne in Senator Kennedy's automobile on Chappaquiddick Island in August, 1969.

"Mr. Hunt asked me if I would like to have him try to get that information and I said, 'Certainly,'" Mr. Colson testified.

Mr. Colson also acknowledged authorizing another Hunt errand, the trip to Denver in a red-wig disguise to interview Mrs. Dita Beard, Lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, about her purported memorandum linking an I.T.T. donation to the Republicans to Government help in a corporation case. But Mr. Colson said that that trip, too, had been initiated by Hunt.

Mr. Colson said that the White House paid Hunt's expenses for the trip to New England on the Kennedy investigation. He said he did not know who paid for the Denver trip.

Mr. Colson's deposition included denials that he knew of the Watergate bugging plans in advance. For the first time, however, Mr. Colson said that within a week after the Watergate break-in, John W. Mitchell, the former Attorney General and Nixon campaign manager, told him that his friend Hunt was implicated in the bugging raid "up to his ears."

but Denies Knowing of Hunt's C.I.A. Aid

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Associated Press

Charles W. Colson, former special counsel to President Nixon, arriving yesterday at the hearing of the House subcommittee inquiring into C.I.A. involvement in Watergate.