

Hunt Tells of Plot to Drug Columnist

New York

Convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt says he was never ordered to assassinate columnist Jack Anderson — only to drug him, according to Time magazine.

Hunt says he was ordered by then White House counsel Charles Colson to administer a drug to Anderson before one of his live radio appearances and "cause him to ramble incoherently," the magazine says in its current issue. Colson hotly denied ever hearing of such a plan, Time said.

Time said its correspondent, David Beckwith, interviewed Hunt in the Eglin Air Force Base prison camp in Florida after reports that the Nixon administration had put a murder contract on Anderson.

Hunt denied there was an assassination plot, but said Colson proposed the drugging as a means of discrediting Anderson, whose

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reporting of inside information had angered the White House.

Hunt said he and another Watergate conspirator, G. Gordon Liddy, set up a luncheon meeting with a former CIA physician and discussed with him ways of drugging Anderson, the magazine said.

One plan was to spread a drug on the steering wheel of Anderson's car. The drug would enter the body through the skin but the plan was discarded as too chancy. Another, to slip a hallucinogen into a regular medicine bottle used by Anderson, also was turned down because there was no way of knowing when he would take the pill.

The final scheme, to slip something into Anderson's drink at a cocktail party, also fell by the wayside. Hunt remembered that Anderson is a teetotaler.

Associated Press