

Colson pleads guilty to obstructing justice

WASHINGTON—Former White House Special Counsel Charles W. Colson, promising to cooperate in other Watergate-related cases, unexpectedly pleaded guilty Monday to a single count of obstructing justice in the prosecution of Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg.

Colson, once one of President Nixon's closest advisers, almost certainly will be questioned—and may be called to testify—about allegations that he had discussions with President Nixon about clemency for the Watergate break-in defendants; that he was involved in a \$2 million pledge by milk cooperatives for Nixon's re-election; and that he was involved in the aftermath of International Telephone and Telegraph's

favorable antitrust settlements and ITT's promise of up to \$400,000 for the 1972 Republican National Convention.

In addition, former White House Domestic Affairs Assistant John D. Ehrlichman now is the remaining chief defendant in the Ellsberg trial scheduled to start June 17, and presumably Colson must testify against him.

And Colson presumably will be called to testify in the Watergate cover-up trial, scheduled for Sept. 7, against Ehrlichman, former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman.

Colson, 42, pleaded guilty to a one-count information—a charge filed by a prosecutor—during a short proceeding before U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell. The judge set sentencing for June 21 and released him on his personal recognizance.

Colson faces a possible maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. Because the crime is a felony, he also faces possible disbarment. Since he left the White House 15 months ago, he has represented the Teamsters Union.

The three-page information charged that Colson, starting June 28, 1971, obstructed justice "by devising and implementing a scheme to defame and destroy the public image and credibility of Daniel Ellsberg." It said the scheme included getting information from the psychiatric files of Ellsberg.

Colson, Ehrlichman and three others were charged with conspiracy to violate the citizen's rights of Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, Ellsberg's psychoanalyst, through the burglary of his office.



Charles W. Colson

News From United Press International

New trial possible

Ray gets hearing

WASHINGTON—James Earl Ray won Supreme Court clearance Monday to seek withdrawal of his guilty plea and a new trial in the 1968 slaying of Martin Luther King Jr. The Court held his lawyers may have unduly influenced him because of a book in which they had an interest.

Without comment, the Court rejected an appeal by the state of Tennessee of an order from the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that a hearing be held to determine whether Ray had been deprived of his constitutional rights to due process and assistance of counsel.

That hearing now can be held, and if the change of plea is accepted Ray would be entitled to a new trial. He pleaded guilty in 1969 to the slaying of the civil rights leader in a Memphis, Tenn. motel, and was sentenced to 99 years in state prison.

The assassination on April 4, 1968, touched off rioting in the nation's capital and other cities.

Shortly after he was sentenced, Ray claimed that his counsel, well-known

criminal attorney Percy Foreman of Houston, had coerced him into pleading guilty in order to keep facts in the case from coming out in open court.

Ray turned his case over to Foreman after dismissing attorney Arthur Hanes, who had signed a contract with writer William Bradford Huie for a book on the King slaying, with Hanes to get 30 per cent of the royalties. Foreman kept the agreement in effect, but increased his share to 60 per cent.

Ray contended that Foreman advised him to plead guilty so that information on the case could be preserved exclusively for the book.

Judge William E. Miller, writing the appeals court decision that a change-of-plea hearing should be held in U.S. district court, said:

"The allegations...if true, would support a finding that Ray's attorneys deliberately compromised their client's interests in order to further the financial success of Huie's works in which they themselves had a substantial interest.

"Such conduct would constitute an outrageous abrogation of the standards which the legal profession sets for itself and upon which its clients have a right to rely."

"If the allegations are correct," Miller said, Ray's lawyers "not only did not properly advise him but deliberately misled and coerced him. It is inconceivable to us how a plea entered under these circumstances could be either intelligent or voluntary."

Trial Judge W. Preston Battle questioned Ray thoroughly at the outset of the trial and Ray said his plea was knowledgeable and voluntary.

Israeli parliament votes new minister

BEIRUT — Yitzhak Rabin succeeded Golda Meir on Monday as prime minister of Israel, pledging that Israel will seek peace from a position of military strength and will not surrender all occupied territory demanded by the Arabs as a precondition for peace.

The 120-member Knesset parliament voted 61-51 with five abstentions to approve Rabin's government in a ballot that made him Israel's fifth prime minister in its turbulent 26-year history. Rabin needed only a simple majority of the Knesset members present. But a negative vote by one of the Rafi faction members of his ruling Labor party foreshadowed problems in future parliamentary votes.

In Geneva, Israeli and Syrian generals, reached agreement Monday on the technicalities of troop and weapon disengagement and on the exchange of all

remaining prisoners of war and the dead. The Israeli-Syrian military working group said the agreements would be signed on Wednesday with a final detailed disengagement map.

All was quiet along the Golan Heights front between Israel and Syria. The guns fell silent there last Friday as the basic troop disengagement agreement, worked out by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in an arduous month of shuttle diplomacy, was being signed in Geneva, thus ending 81 consecutive days of fighting.

In Cairo, a United Nations spokesman said the first U.N. troops assigned to patrol the Heights left Egypt by air Monday for Syria. They will be stationed between Syrian and Israeli forces.

The commander of the U.N. unit, Brig. Gen. Gonzalo Bricano of Peru, flew out first followed by 29 Austrian soldiers travelling in a different plane.

They will be followed by 40 Peruvians who left Rabah in the Sinai peninsula Monday in trucks, the spokesman said.

In Beirut, *The Arab World*, a usually well-informed daily news bulletin, said President Hafez Assad of Syria has promised Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger that his country will not allow Palestinian guerrillas to cross the cease-fire line into Israel.

Dismissal of indictments possible

Gesell rejects Nixon's position

WASHINGTON — A federal judge Monday rejected President Nixon's claim right to be the sole judge of what White House evidence to surrender for a criminal trial. He warned against the remaining Ellsberg break-in indictments may be thrown out if Nixon does not honor defense subpoenas.

Charges against one accused conspirator have already been dismissed, and a second — former presidential special counsel Charles W. Colson — unexpectedly pleaded guilty in the case before U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell Monday.

While expressing hope the President will supply sufficient materials to "allow the trial to go forward" June 17 as scheduled, Gesell nonetheless said further appropriate action would have to be considered if he does not — including contempt, indefinite delay of the trial or dismissal of all charges.

"If the court determines that production is required of any document, then that

document must be produced..." said Gesell at a court hearing. "Government agencies must disclose necessary evidence and there can be no trial unless it is done."

He said this issue "overhangs all pending Watergate prosecutions and should not be permitted to remain unresolved."

Gesell said he "must reject the President's suggestion" made to the court last week that the chief executive has sole authority to decide what evidence may be produced.

"Only the court can determine the relevancy or materiality of subpoenaed materials," he said. "These are matters of law, not of policy."

While rejecting Nixon's claim right to decide what defense evidence to produce, Gesell endorsed a White House suggestion that the requests be pared down. Ehrlichman's lawyer said they would begin culling Ehrlichman's files at the White House Monday afternoon, and were assured full access unfettered by Secret Service

supervision.

Gesell said he would then review the selected materials and decide which were relevant. He scheduled another hearing for Friday, the morning after a court-set deadline for Nixon to honor the subpoenas.

Neo-Fascist—Mafia link thought possible in Italy

ROME—Neo-Fascist gangs blamed for a bombing that took seven lives at a Brescia political rally may have links with the Mafia, police sources said Monday.

They said investigators were exploring this possibility after finding evidence that the right-wing extremists financed their activities at least partly through kidnappings for ransom and sales of illegal weapons.

The Mafia, according to police, is an organized crime ring which has extended its sphere of influence from Sicily to the mainland. Police say it has a monopoly on both kidnappings and arms trafficking and would have little tolerance for outside competition. Thus, there would have to be Mafia agreement to the right-wing extremist kidnappings.

Police have found evidence the extremists recently kidnapped one unnamed Milan businessman and freed him for a ransom payment of \$800,000.

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