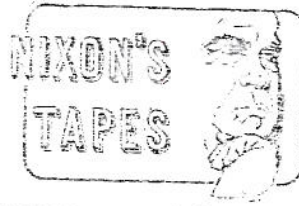


Learn Mrs. Hunt carried

By Tom Littlewood
Sun-Times Bureau



WASHINGTON — President Nixon was informed all day that Mrs. E. Howard Hunt had been carrying payment to Chicago to finance her recovery from convalescence when the plane she was riding crashed near Midway Airport Dec. 8, 1972.

A partial transcript of the conversation between Mr. Nixon and Dean on March 21, 1972, was obtained by the Sun-Times. Mr. Nixon said he had been told by W. Mark Felt, a former CIA operative, that the distribution of money to the Cuban committee was done through a man named "Mr. X" who was convicted of the Watergate break-in. Dean told the President that former Atty. Gen. John Mitchell arranged the payment of \$100,000 to Mrs. Hunt by her husband, Richard M. Hunt, and Nixon's lawyer.

"They put that under the name of a Cuban committee, I understand," the President said.

in the tape-recorded March 21 conversation.

Dean: "Well, they had a Cuban committee and some of it was given to Hunt's lawyer, who in turn passed it out. You know, when Hunt's wife was flying to Chicago with \$10,000, she was actually going to pass that money to one of the Cubans — to meet him in Chicago and pass it to somebody there."

Mr. Nixon: "... but I would certainly keep that cover for whatever it is worth."

Mrs. Hunt and 44 others died on Dec. 8, 1972, when a United Air Lines jetliner crashed near the airport. She was carrying \$10,000 in \$100 bills in her purse.

The purpose of the payoff, according to Dean, was to buy the silence of the convicted burglars about the lawlessness of the bugging operation by high officials of the administration.

Later in the March conversation, Mr. Nixon recalled that: "... There was a discussion with somebody about Hunt's problem on account of his wife and I said of course compensation of his sentence could be considered on the basis of his wife's death, and that is the only conversation I ever had in that light."

When Dean estimated that the continuing demands of the imprisoned burglars could cost \$1 million over two years, the President said it would be no problem to raise the additional money.

"You need it in cash don't you?" Mr. Nixon said to Dean. "I am just thinking out loud here for a moment. Would you

hush money in crash here

put that through the Cuban committee?"

Dean: "No."

Mr. Nixon: "It is going to be checks, cash money, etc. How, if that ever comes out, are you going to handle it? Is the Cuban committee an obstruction of justice, if they want to help?"

Dean: "Well they have priests in it."

Mr. Nixon: "Would that give a little bit of cover?"

At that time, Hunt was demanding an immediate payment of \$120,000. It was delivered later the same day by Frederick C. LaRue, then a staff aide.

According to the transcript, Dean described the threat from Hunt.

Mr. Nixon: "That's why for your immediate things you have no choice but to come up with \$120,000, or whatever it is. Right?"

Dean: "That's right."

Nixon: "Would you agree that that's the prime thing that you damn well better get done?"

Dean: "Obviously he ought to be given some signal or way."

Mr. Nixon: "Euphratic period, get it in a way that ... who is going to talk to him? (Charles) Colson? He is the one who is supposed to show him."