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Nixon Suggested Vandalizing RNC Offices

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 14—Two weeks after the 1972 Watergate break-in, President Richard M. Nixon directed his aides to vandalize his own party's headquarters and pin the blame on Democrats.

The plot, which was not carried out, was detailed in White House recordings among more than 200 hours of tapes released by the National Archives. The latest tape was reported today by the San Francisco Examiner. In a July 1, 1972, Oval Office conversation, Nixon suggested to chief political aide Charles Colson that Re-

publican National Committee offices be vandalized during that year's Democratic Party convention.

Much of the talk was elliptical or hypothetical as Nixon envisioned the damage done to his own party's offices. "It may be that what they want is to get in and sort of get at files in retaliation against us," Nixon says. "You know, the young people."

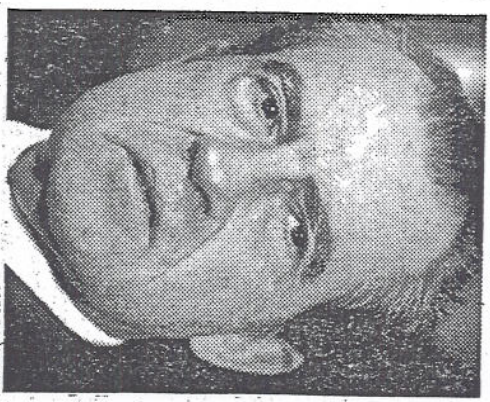
"I was thinking, if they make that error—and I would consider it an error—if they get in one night . . . and tear it to shambles, what would you think if that happened?"

In a conversation earlier that morn-

ing, Nixon and his aide mentioned vandalism at both the Democratic and Republican headquarters. "I think it would be very helpful if they came in one morning and found files strewn all over the place," Colson says.

"And some missing," Nixon adds. "I mean, if something could be very open, I mean demolished."

Moments later, Nixon emphasized that several thousand dollars of damage should be done. "But what I mean is," Nixon says, "it should be . . . where it's really torn up. They'll charge it's been done by Republicans, won't they? So, what the hell!"



RICHARD M. NIXON
1973 FILE PHOTO
... wanted to blame Democrats