

# A Taped Talk on 'Nailing' Ellsberg

Other versions, NYTimes and WXPost, same date.

## Washington

The political advantages of "nailing" Daniel Ellsberg were of major interest at the White House two months before his psychiatrist's office was burglarized, according to documents obtained by the Senate Watergate committee.

The transcript of a tape-recorded phone conversation July 1, 1971, between E. Howard Hunt Jr. and Charles W. Colson, then a White House aide, shows that the two discussed how to "discredit the New Left."

The tone of much of their conversation, which occurred shortly before Hunt was hired as a member of the White House "plumbers" squad, contrasts with "national security" justifications that have been raised in defense of the burglary.

## ACT

There is nothing in the transcript, however, suggesting that Hunt or Colson planned a burglary or any other illegal act.

Foremr White House aides John D. Ehrlichman and Egil G. Krogh, under indictment in the Ellsberg burglary, have said that the break-in was motivated by national security considerations.

Ellsberg had leaked the secret Pentagon Papers to the press in June, 1971.

A partial transcript of the Hunt-Colson phone talk, along with a supporting memo, was published yesterday by the Washington Star-News. Other sources confirmed that the Senate

## Wilbur Mills Up and Around In Hospital

Little Rock, Ark.

Representative Wilbur Mills (Dem-Ark.) is improving daily following back surgery but will remain in the hospital until early next week, a Baptist Medical Center spokesman said yesterday.

The chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee underwent an operation last week to repair a ruptured disc in his lower back.

The hospital spokesman said Mills is walking more every day and is gaining strength. *Associated Press*

committee had obtained them.

## PAPERS

The phone conversation occurred one day after the U.S. Supreme Court gave the go-ahead to publication of the Pentagon Papers.

In the transcript, Colson tells Hunt "We were trying to figure out how to recoup lost political ground" in the case.

Hunt pleaded guilty earlier this year to conspiracy and burglary charges in connection with the Watergate break-in.

## 'MARTYR'

"Ellsberg could be turned into a martyr of the New Left — he probably will be

anyway," Colson said, "or it could become another Alger Hiss case, where the guy is exposed, other people were operating with him, and this may be the way to really carry it out. We might be able to put this bastard into a helluva situation and discredit the New Left."

Hunt replied, "It would be a marvelous way if we could do it . . ."

Later, Hunt added: "you're in a much better spot to see how the administration stands to gain from it, and at this point I would be willing to set aside my personal yen for vengeance to make sure that the administration profits from this."

According to the transcript, Colson suggested "We should go down the line to nail the guy cold."

"I want to see the guy hung if it can be done to the advantage of the administration," Hunt said.

## ALONE

"I think it can be done," Colson replied. "I think there are ways to do it and I don't think this guy is operating alone."

Hunt: "Well, of course he isn't operating alone. He's got a lot of people who are supporting him, aiding and abetting him, there's no question about it."

Colson: "But I'm not not so sure it doesn't go deeper than that."

Hunt: "Oh, really? You're thinking of like (Democratic national chairman Lawrence) O'Brien or . . ."

Colson: "Oh no, I'm thinking of the enemy . . ."

Hunt: "The real enemy. Well, of course, they stand to profit the most, no question about it. You've got codes and policy making apparatus stripped bare for public examination, all that sort of thing."

## DINNER

The conversation concluded with Colson saying, "I think there is a fertile field here and I just thought I'd try it out on you to see what you thought of it." He told Hunt, "I'll be back to you", and promised to have dinner with him soon.

Colson, who was not available for comment yesterday, is expected to be questioned about his dealings with Hunt when he testifies before the Watergate committee later this month.