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Charming the Spanish-Americans

Classified White House documents, which we can now publish for the first time, reveal how President Nixon's daughters were used in 1972 to charm Spanish-speaking voters.

Both Julie Eisenhower and Tricia Cox not only were recruited to campaign for their father among Americans of Spanish heritage, but the documents show that government money was spent on their political speeches and briefing papers.

The President eagerly wanted the support of the 12 million Spanish-speaking Americans, who are concentrated in key states. Conceivably, they could have provided the margin of victory in such crucial states as California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Texas.

Likely, the President would have done well enough in the Spanish-American precincts without the political trickery that characterized his 1972 campaign. His closest friend, Bebe Rebozo, came from the Spanish-speaking community.

Nixon also appointed more Spanish-Americans to high positions than any past President. They included Romana Banuelos as U.S. Treasurer, Phillip Sanchez as antipoverty czar, Hilary Sandoval as Small Business Administrator and Carlos Villarreal as urban transit head. A Spanish-American, Horacio Rivero, was also named Ambassador to Spain.

The President even established a White House Task Force to seek jobs and business grants for the Spanish-speaking. But like so many worthy projects, it was corrupted by the President's campaign crew, who used the task force more to gain votes than to give help.

The classified documents show that the task force provided campaign material for the President's daughters. Tricia's husband, Ed Cox, also got help from the task force for political speeches. Yet the task force was fi-

nanced with taxpayers' money, not campaign funds.

In an "Administrative-Confidential" memo to White House aide Charles Colson, the task force chief, William Marumoto, reported in April, 1972: "We provided Julie Eisenhower . . . a copy of achievement list" for campaign purposes. The following June, another White House aide, Carlos Conde, "developed briefing papers for Julie . . ."

Later the same month, Marumoto confides how he is working with the Nixon campaign committee "re Julie Eisenhower's participating in a few SS (Spanish-speaking) activities" for the campaign.

Tricia Cox also got political briefing papers from White House speech writers in June, 1972. Afterward, she posed for campaign pictures, taken by the White House photographer, of herself and wives of Spanish-heritage leaders.

Later that month, the task force prepared her material for a political speech. In a confidential memo, the task force reported triumphantly that the audience for Tricia's speech was "stacked with our people." The White House, using federal funds, also printed and distributed her speech.

The President's aides also wanted to use Ed Cox in the Spanish-American vote drive because of his association with Ralph Nader. A classified memo reveals that in October, 1972, the White House "provided background and speech material" to Ed Cox's speechwriter (and) worked . . . on the appearance of Ed Cox at a parade in New York."

The same White House Task Force, which was supposed to be helping Spanish-Americans get grants, actually worked behind the scenes to knock out grants for those who opposed the President politically. A June 23, 1972, memo reports that the task force enlisted White House aide "Nate Bayer of the Domestic Affairs Council re identifying SS (Spanish-speaking) groups who have applied for federal

grants . . . who are unfriendly toward the administration."

Another memo reveals that the White House kept a watchful eye on Spanish-American government employees who were known to be Democrats. States a September, 1972, intra-White House memo to Charles Colson and Fred Malek:

Presidential aide Tony Rodriguez "is working . . . to see that Armando Rodriguez, HEW, is kept in line. He is a Democrat that is screening all Spanish-Speaking applicants at OE (Office of Education)."

The memos also show that Nixon campaign aide Alex Armendariz sought to use the Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish-Speaking People, which was supposed to be totally nonpartisan, to attack New York City's Mayor John Lindsay. This proposal was made in June, 1972, when Lindsay was regarded as a Democratic vice presidential prospect.

Armendariz noted that Mayor Lindsay had cut some funds from a bilingual education program. "How about taking a slap at Lindsay?" urged Armendariz in a memo to the Cabinet committee chairman, Henry Ramirez. Ramirez issued a bitter attack.

On the other hand, the memos reveal the wholesale use of grants and patronage to reward Spanish-Americans who supported the President.

Footnote: A classified "action memo" sent to "the Attorney General" on Dec. 16, 1971, proves that former Attorney General John Mitchell lied when he swore he took no active role in the campaign while he was at the Justice Department. The memo asked Mitchell for "your attention now" on decisions involving the "Spanish-speaking, Labor, Middle America, Ethnic-Catholic." The memo makes it perfectly clear that Mitchell was directing the campaign from his office in the Justice Department.