

What Nixon Called His Brother

Washington

One of the things that worried Richard M. Nixon as the Watergate coverup began to unravel in the spring of 1973 was his "poor damn dumb brother," according to a secret White House tape played in U.S. District court yesterday.

The reference apparently was to F. Donald Nixon, who occasionally embarrassed the President, particularly because of his dealings with billionaire eccentric Howard Hughes.

In a tape of an April 14, 1973, White House meeting played at the Watergate coverup trial, Mr. Nixon and his key aides were recounting the information that bugging conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. might disclose if he told the truth to a grand jury.

They were particularly concerned about "hush money." But they also discussed a Hughes-connected mission in which Hunt had been engaged.

"There're others . . . ,"

Mr. Nixon said, "other delicate, things, too . . . Apart from my poor damn dumb brother, which unfortunately or fortunately was a long time ago."

Donald Nixon, who had business ties with Hughes' associates, received a \$200,000 loan from the industrialist in the 1950s. At one point during the Nixon Administration, the President had a wiretap placed on his brother, apparently to keep track of his activities.

One theory advanced for the Watergate break-in was that then-Democratic Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien, who had done public relations work for Hughes in the past, possessed documents that would have disclosed a controversial \$100,000 gift from Hughes to Mr. Nixon in 1970 through Charles G. Rebozo.

When Mr. Nixon released a transcript of that April 14 tape last spring, the transcript simply read "my poor brother."

United Press