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Frost Interview

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Nixon Contradicts Rebozo Testimony

Washington

Richard Nixon on television tonight contradicts the testimony of his friend and banker, Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, about the controversial campaign contributions of Howard Hughes, the eccentric billionaire.

Nixon, in the fourth of his television interviews with David Frost, concedes he offered to use political campaign funds controlled by Rebozo to defray the legal expenses of his key aides, H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

When testifying before the Senate Watergate committee, Rebozo was asked about the Hughes cash contributions. Rebozo said Nixon told him in March, 1973, as the Watergate scandal began to engulf the President and his aides, that he must return the Hughes money.

Rebozo also recalled that Nixon said it would have been wrong to use that money because it constituted campaign contributions.

But Nixon tells Frost a different version.

Frost brings up the Haldeman and Ehrlichman resignations in April, 1973 and then asks the former President about the "very generous offer you made" to use

the \$800,000 for lawyer's fees from a fund that Rebozo had. When Frost asks Nixon what he had in mind there, Nixon replies:

"Well, as a matter of fact, I had in mind the campaign contribution that he received from Hughes . . ."

The fourth interview also covers the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile, the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew, the events surrounding his final days in office and his acceptance of a pardon after his own resignation. In it, Nixon makes a number of new assertions.

On the Agnew case: Nixon says that Elliot Richardson, then the attorney general, and Henry Petersen, in charge of the Justice Department's criminal division, both "strongly" said they would recommend a prison term for Agnew.

On the final days: Nixon confirms many of the details previously reported in the book by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, such as crying and praying alone with Henry Kissinger on the night before his resignation. But he implies the reporters' book may have contributed to Mrs. Nixon's stroke. "All I can say is Mrs. Nixon read it, and her stroke came three days later," he says. He also describes the reporters as "trash," and adds: "I will never forgive them. Never."

On his pardon: He says he accepted President Ford's pardon after weighing all the consequences. A key factor in his mind, he says, was the advice of his lawyer, Jack Miller. He quotes Miller as telling him "there was no chance whatever I could get a fair trial."

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