

“Our Former CIA Operative, Howard Hunt”

Date: November 3, 1971

Participant: Richard M. Nixon

Participant: Charles W. Colson

Start Time: 15:01

Place Name: Old Executive Office Building

In a speech delivered on 12 October 1971 to the Chicago chapter of the Council on Foreign Relations, Senator Edward M. Kennedy [D–Massachusetts] criticized the Nixon administration’s Latin America policies and urged the administration to explore reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Here, President Nixon and Special Counsel Charles W. Colson discussed how to use Kennedy’s remarks against Kennedy, as well as the Democrats, in advance of the 1972 presidential election.

Charles W. “Chuck” Colson: There are little things that we have going that one by one, I think, will nibble away at [*unclear*].

President Nixon: [*Tape whip.*] [*Unclear.*]

Colson: [Edward M. “Teddy”] Kennedy’s [D–Massachusetts] statement about recognizing Cuba was just, God, we never thought he was going to carry Florida. That’s—

President Nixon: We’re [*unclear*] that around, aren’t we?

Colson: Oh, that’s [*unclear*]. Our former CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] operative, [E.] Howard Hunt [Jr.], who’s been working on the Pentagon Papers, he ran the Cuban government in exile—

President Nixon: Right.

Colson: —through the end of the Bay of Pigs.

President Nixon: Yeah.

Colson: All of his friends are down there. That’s . . . that’s been widely distributed. He’s also made his friends available to create a little hell when the Democrats have their convention down there [in Miami].

End of excerpt.

“Richard M. Nixon and Charles W. Colson on 3 November 1971,” Conversation 301-025, Draft Transcript, Presidential Recordings Program, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.