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Conversation No. 388-8C

Date: November 8, 1972

Time: Unknown between 2:05 pm - 3:28 pm

Location: Executive Office Building

Participants: Richard M. Nixon; Robert H. Finch

At the conclusion of a long conversation in the Executive Office Building between President Nixon and Counsel to the President Chuck Colson and later California Lieutenant Governor Bob Finch, Nixon again emphasizes that something has to be done to shake up the Republican National Committee.

He state that Party is in a state of disarray, to which Finch responds, "Well, your power is so great now, and the Party is so far down [...] certainly you have to break up this terrible division between the [Republican] Senate and the House Campaign [Committees]."

Nixon notes that the only prominent Republicans who would be opposed to such a shake up "would be the poor bastards that are next on line to get the job" [of leading the Republican National Committee].

Finch: I'll work up the scenario.

Nixon: That's right.

Finch: No, [unclear] I have to go to California, [unclear] I just want you to be—

Nixon: Yeah.

Finch: [Unclear].

Nixon: Yeah.

Finch: [Unclear] [what I saw today] because I wasn't [unclear], in regard to timing, or what I said.

Nixon: Well as you know, we've got a terrific White House staff.

Finch: Well, that's the biggest thing you've got to [bank] on. [Unclear]!

Nixon: And the thing you've got to realize is that we no longer [unclear].

Finch: That's right. Conservatives, conservatives [unclear] and [unclear] done. I mean, we don't need [unclear].

Nixon: And you'll get now a fine group.

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Finch: Herb said 'I'd like to go back to California.' [*Unclear*] his job [*unclear*] broadcaster [*unclear*] [in New York. He doesn't like New York]. He wants to [stay around] [with me] [once] [*unclear*]. He wants to go back to California. He wants to make some money.

Nixon: God, I wish [he'd get] Valenti out.

Finch: [*Unclear*].

Nixon: [*Unclear*] or maybe we can [*unclear*] these two along.

Finch: [*Unclear*] [pretty much] [*unclear*].

Nixon: [*Unclear*] they [*unclear*], Johnson squeezed [*unclear*] to begin with.

Finch: Yeah.

Nixon: Johnson squeezed him because Valenti [*unclear*].

Finch: [*Unclear*].

Nixon: Was she the one he was shacking up with? [You] remember [*unclear*]? Nothing wrong with that I guess. Valenti [*unclear*], Christ, he's got four years. He should leave!

Finch: [*Unclear*] aside from [*unclear*] personal [*unclear*] foundation [*unclear*] the point that I'd like to keep [*unclear*]. I'd like to [*unclear*] all [fucked] up.

Nixon: Um-hmm.

Finch: [*Unclear*] isn't that [*unclear*] thing? [*Unclear*] the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations? [*Unclear*].

Nixon: Right. Well, that's, we've got to do something about [*unclear*] and then the National [*Republican*] Committee, too. I've got, Chuck's point is good.

Finch: Well, your power is so great now, and the Party is so far down, that if it's ever going to happen—

Nixon: But you've got to do it in the next month.

Finch: Yes, sir. If it's ever going to happen, this is—that month is the time to do it, and whether you change your mind, or, but certainly you have to break up this terrible division between the [*Republican*] Senate and the House Campaign [*Committees*]. That's what we're thinking. That's what we're doing. [*Unclear*] program to really organize it.

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Nixon: The only—The only ones who really oppose that, of course, would be the poor bastards that are next on line to get the job. But, on the other hand—

Finch: Well, next on line, you know, that's Russian roulette.

Nixon: Right.

Finch: The Senate Campaign Committee [*unclear*] guy who's out.

Nixon: The point that I make is that—

Finch: It doesn't matter how many [*unclear*]. I mean, you're under a lot of [*unclear*] a lot of free money floating around.

Nixon: Well, [*unclear*] just call [the man] and say 'look, listen.' Their answer will be that 'well, Jesus Christ, the fault's all the White House, the fault's the President.' Now Bob, no White House has ever done things for these assholes in Congress [as] we [have], you know.

Finch: [*Unclear*].

Nixon: Huh?

Finch: The letters, and the [*unclear*], and the calls, and the first family, and the [*unclear*]. Jesus Christ! [*Unclear*] And also, [*unclear*] the press guys already today, you know, [*unclear*].

Nixon: [*Unclear*] what?

Finch: [*Unclear*] made this point today. The press guys I've seen—

Nixon: Good.

Finch: [*Unclear*] they're whining [*unclear*].

Nixon: Aren't you glad that did, however, decide to do those last few days of campaigning?

Finch: [*Unclear*] Louis Nunn.

Nixon: Huh?

Finch: It made the difference.

Nixon: Well, the point is, whether they made the difference or not, if I hadn't have done this, they [*unclear*].

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Finch: Well, this is going to be a tough one, but I mean—

Nixon: Well, you're going to win. You're going to win.

Finch: Do you think?

Nixon: Goddamn it, yes! You've got a good team, just keep it together.

Finch: [I'll believe it] [*unclear*] [when I see it].

Nixon: What's [*unclear*] it though?

Finch: Well, that's the other thing I want to [*unclear*].

Nixon: [He] [*unclear*].

Finch: [*unclear*] has fought this battle over revenue sharing. It's [*unclear*] revenue [*unclear*] or whether I would—

Nixon: Why don't you bring in [*unclear*]?

Finch: Oh! He's the kind who [loves] [*unclear*] from state, and [*unclear*] with Reagan. [He led] [*unclear*] those damn [*unclear*]. My [hope] is to get—

Nixon: Totally loyal.

Finch: He is, and he's carried the [*unclear*] for you, you know.

Nixon: Totally. All [of it] [*unclear*].

Finch: [*Unclear*] I mean, maybe we can him in the subcabinet or something. But I'll talk to Haldeman, I'll [*unclear*].

Nixon: [*Unclear*]. Yeah. Yeah.

Finch: Well, I hope the vacation—

Nixon: All in all, when you stop to think what we went through in '60, then '62, ten years ago, then '68, [*unclear*], you ought to be sure to get Teddy White to [*unclear*].

Finch: Yes, sir.

Nixon: Fine, bye.