

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING  
BETWEEN AND H.R. HALDEMAN  
ON MARCH 22, 1973  
FROM 9:11 TO 10:35 A.M.

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BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON  
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(Noise)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Who, uh, has talked at all to, uh, (unintelligible) Kleindienst about the, uh, about the Dean thing? Has anybody even heard?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Well Gray, you know what I mean, all this, this stuff where, uh, uh, where, uh, Gray is saying he took (unintelligible). Who is, who is advising him on it?

HALDEMAN: I haven't any idea. If it's not--according to Dean, it would be John if anybody

PRESIDENT: No. No. No.

HALDEMAN: ...According to Dean.

PRESIDENT: Bet Gray doesn't want any advice.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Well, that's fine. But who is in touch with Gray?

HALDEMAN: But nobody is. Gray keeps in touch with Ehrlichman and calls him after his, his day, and tells him what a great job he did,...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...what his real strategy is, and, uh, he doesn't want or take any advice. The, uh--you talked to Kleindienst, uh, way back in the beginning of the, of the thing, and at that point when you told Ehrlichman and me to basically not to get into that stuff, which we haven't, except that Gray does check with John, uh (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I don't know if he's checked with Dean or not. I don't, I don't know whether Dean is, is trying to counsel him, which he can't.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: If Dean can't, and, uh, I think that, uh, we've just got a loose gun that, uh, rolls back and forth on the deck there, and--

PRESIDENT: Well, of course, I suppose nobody's gonna, it, uh, I see, there's so many obvious things, but, I mean, you know. Gray should not be on the defensive at all with regard to furnishing information to the White House.

HALDEMAN: Well, of course, he shouldn't, I mean...

PRESIDENT: He should...

HALDEMAN: ...(Unintelligible) he for God's sakes has not been.

PRESIDENT: ...he should be in, he should say, "Senators, you (unintelligible) as Director of the FBI. It's always been our tradition, under this guidelines, the President laid out, to furnish information to (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) say when I talk to him?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. See, what--that puts it, the FB-, the lawyer in him across.

HALDEMAN: The point is...

PRESIDENT: There isn't any question about that, and as far as the White House is concerned, well of course, the White House has had direct access to the FBI. We have to, we make checks. Dean's the guy that does all the checking on every, everything that comes up legally. That's what I mean. I, I was wondering--

HALDEMAN: He, he has to, well, that's the position Gray has taken. That's (unintelligible) and he's taking it pretty strongly. He's just gotten 'em all, that's what they're, what they're (unintelligible). He takes it too...

PRESIDENT: ...strongly.

HALDEMAN: too strongly.

PRESIDENT: Well, I had...

HALDEMAN: I think it means--

PRESIDENT: I don't mean, I don't mean, Bob, he's taking the position strongly in furnishing it to us, but just put it on the other side.

HALDEMAN: Put the Congress into it--

PRESIDENT: That's the point.

HALDEMAN: That's the problem. He can only do that .to a degree. You see, Gray won't, won't, apparently won't...

PRESIDENT: Program.

HALDEMAN: ...sort of fudge anything, you know, or fuzz anything, he has to do it all in, in these...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...damn precise, uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...precise terms, and

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: and as--

PRESIDENT: Right. Okey, Bob. I suppose there's no reason to --well, I don't want to call--

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HALDEMAN: There may be, it, it, they--

PRESIDENT: We got an interesting, uh--Colson had, uh, told me that he wanted to talk with, uh, Baker's administrative assistant, in talking in conversation on this thing, where he showed us what (unintelligible) When I talked to Baker, for example, he said he did not want to talk to anybody at the White House, he did not want to talk to Dean. He said--I, I said, "Who do you want to talk to?" He says, "I'll talk to Kleindienst." You may recall I told you that.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I--

PRESIDENT: I told them. Now (laughs), uh, Colson comes in with, uh--I don't know whether this is, uh, how much of this is Colson, how much is the administrative, the administrative assistant of Baker's. I heard that he felt that he wanted to be, be helpful to the White House. He doesn't want to get out on the wrong side of this thing. He wants the President to know that, but he doesn't feel that he has anybody to talk to here and so forth.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: And, I said, "Nobody." I said, "I told you that, I didn't want to talk to anybody" I said, "You should talk to Kleindienst", and, of course, he said, "Well, now Colson sort of (unintelligible) Colson work something out (unintelligible). "Well, that can't be. Uh, what I'm getting at is that somebody is pulling somebody's leg here. Uh, what the, what (unintelligible). I recall that Baker said he didn't, uh, uh, know about this (unintelligible). The whole point is this, you have at the present time, Bob, a situation where, uh, where--I don't know what--like with Colson. I, that's why I only raised the Gray question tangentially. The question is, what in the hell is Kleindienst (unintelligible) handle Gray. Uh, see what I mean? If we, if it isn't done from here, we haven't got anybody to steer him toward it, then there must be somebody else that can do it. 'Cause otherwise you do have a loose cannon on the deck.

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HALDEMAN: Uh, I don't know. The jury's (unintelligible). When you met with Kleindienst, nobody else was there, was there? Was there anyone from the White House there?

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: The, the, but there was nothing--the, with Kleindienst there was no problem.

PRESIDENT: Well--

HALDEMAN: There's gotta be a problem when Kleindienst talks to you. The problem is what happens afterwards.

PRESIDENT: Well, the point was, (unintelligible) Kleindienst was clear. I said, I said "Baker came in to see me, he wants to talk to you." I have already reported on this, you know that...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...he said, that Klein--that, that, Kleindienst said that, that he was waiting for Baker and Ervin to come down to see him, but it's his, his ball.

HALDEMAN: You see my point?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. I, I said, now, I said, Baker wants to talk to you.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) and I talk to Kleindienst then and, and raise some questions?

PRESIDENT: I think you should.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I think somebody has to.

HALDEMAN: Maybe it'd be better get...

PRESIDENT: I guess I could call him in, but God damn it, I don't...

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HALDEMAN: No question you have to ride herd on this thing.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Alright. The point is that Kleindienst, I mean, uh, Baker is now, uh--'cause according to Colson, and I'm not sure of this either, (unintelligible) that Baker's administrative assistant says that, .that he heard that Baker didn't want to talk to Kleindienst; well God-damn it that's who Baker said he wanted to talk to, and they didn't want to talk to anybody at the White House. But anyway, -uh, on, on both Gray and Dea-, and, and, Baker, it seems to me, Bob, that Kleindienst has gotta pick up the labor more, here, if, uh, he's not going to talk with somebody else.

HALDEMAN: Why not?

PRESIDENT: Why not, and ask him who else, 'cause Kleindienst told him that he thinks the White House shouldn't get into these things' blind. Alright, take the, take them and get going. I was. thinking I might call him in.

HALDEMAN: In that respect, it occurred to me that--

PRESIDENT: Today, you finish your meeting that, uh, and you could, you could, well you could have a bite of lunch, and then I could, uh, I could meet with you at about, uh, 1:30.

HALDEMAN: You mean with the-, with the group?

PRESIDENT: Or maybe with Mitchell and, uh, you know, however, uh, whatever you want. Uh, but maybe Mitchell, uh, Mitchell would just want to have Dean in it at this point. Uh, Dean could be picked up. I wouldn't want it larger than that. I wouldn't want to bring Moore in and all that but, but, uh, well, while Mitchell is here, I should see him. I was so near meeting

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PRESIDENT CONT:with Dick, we had planned to meet during the morning (unintelligible) and why don't you have a bite of lunch. But, you see, I gotta, I gotta be working right through lunch today in order to get (unintelligible). But I, I can be free by 1:30. How does that sould to you, then?

HALDEMAN: Okay. Perfect

PRESIDENT: Then I should have a meeting--

HALDEMAN: Right. Unless John has to go back, but I don't think he does. ,

PRESIDENT: Well, let me put it this way, who should,--- if he, before he goes back, I ought to see John. I want to be sure that he--

HALDEMAN: No, I think

PRESIDENT: I'm put-, I'm putting the heat right on him. Okay.

HALDEMAN: You're putting the heat on him. You could make the--well, I guess the best (unintelligible) cover up the funds. Well--

PRESIDENT: You both have influence with those^ (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible). It wouldn't hurt for you to express to Mitchell some concern that Kleindienst doesn't seem to be stepping up and running things here. That--you could very well get it back today.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: And, see, coming from Mitchell from you, has more--The problem we've got when it comes from any of us

PRESIDENT: I know.

HALDEMAN: ...is that, that...

PRESIDENT: The White House.



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HALDEMAN: ...they read it that the White House, well, and, that, you know, we're trying to cover our own tracks, get them trapped into it and all this kind of crap.

PRESIDENT: Well, I'll get Kleindienst over if that's the thing to do, understand. Don't worry about it; my problem. I'll do everything I can, but I, I said before, I thought he was going to work on it.

(Pause)

HALDEMAN: Hasn't had a track record of doing--

PRESIDENT: Of following through on this kind of stuff. Well, (unintelligible) got a good track record of following through, believe me.

HALDEMAN: You sure do.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I pass on, if you would pass this Baker thing on. It, uh, I think that you probably have to get, uh, keep, uh, Colson a step removed from as (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Why they...

PRESIDENT: Well, why they could, uh--understand--let me say, this was apparently, uh, Colson said that it was their--he didn't ask to see the fellow, the guy asked to see him, which seems to me very, very curious that, uh, Baker's administrative assistant would go see Colson. I don't know what in the hell that's all about. It may be because of Webster's influence on that fact, but I don't know. But, the point is that it's ridiculous that, uh, Baker's wanting to have a contact. He doesn't ind-what'd he say, he didn't want to see anybody at the White House. I said, "Fine."

HALDEMAN: Maybe he figured--of course, see that's--

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PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) seeing Colson keeps him clean on that, he's ridiculous. That's...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...worse off than seeing Colson, he is seeing someone at the White House.

PRESIDENT: Baker (unintelligible) administrative assistant, you know what I mean

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...to see Colson, but, I mean, if he--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) interest.

PRESIDENT: As a matter of fact, Dean is the one that's the least (Unintelligible). Absolute least. He has not a God-damn thing to do with the thing, you know what I mean. Just sitting there advising him and all that sort-of thing. But, uh,--

HALDEMAN: Well, the other thing they thought might work was, was, uh

PRESIDENT: Moore?

HALDEMAN: ...using, using Wally Johnson, which would make it routine then (Unintelligible) Congressional relations guys, and which...

PRESIDENT: He's smart

HALDEMAN: ...clear--he's smart, but also clearly has no involvement at all, I mean, he just doesn't know anything about the case and he doesn't. He just wasn't, wasn't in it anywhere, and, uh, we've been trying that, but but, uh...

PRESIDENT: What happened?

HALDEMAN: ...that, that, well, it was, we got the same word, that Baker didn't want to have any contact with the White House. He wanted to operate separately.

PRESIDENT: Well, why don't you raise the (unintelligible) there are other, other more important things.

HALDEMAN: Well, now that's important too, perhaps if we can get...

PRESIDENT: Some contact.

HALDEMAN: ...if we can get some contact with Baker and work with him--(unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Well, you need contact with Baker and you need contact with Gurney.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Those are the only two fringe benefits. Right?

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Alright.

HALDEMAN: Well, well, on the other side with, with, uh, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Uh, I don't know (unintelligible) uh, no, not really

PRESIDENT: But--

HALDEMAN: ...except it's the closest to, to anything we've had as a tie on the other side.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: You might play a little bit both ways since we're taking off at this point.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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HALDEMAN: And it was worth, worth a try. You got no chance with, with Ervin or Inouye, or...

PRESIDENT: Oh, no.

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Well, I admit, a couple more difficult sessions (unintelligible). Baker wants to contact (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh, Christ.

PRESIDENT: What the hell are we doing?

HALDEMAN: He wants to make sure (unintelligible) set it up any way he wants, wants to do it.

PRESIDENT: He wants (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: We've got to keep Colson (unintelligible), keep Colson's pick up date, Colson will be great in following up on anything you assign him to do in that (unintelligible) basically because of Ervin (unintelligible) competition (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, now, see, that's a lot of bullhit from Colson. 'Cause Ervin isn't going to run the game, he's already annunciated that fact. So he doesn't have, doesn't need any competition. He's not running. So...

PRESIDENT: Colson--does away (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Colson know that?

HALDEMAN: Well, apparently not. We are, I've talked to Dent and we've got the, the, well, things are going down there to get the, uh, we got, we got Gardiner on--

HALDEMAN: Gardiner said (unintelligible) got him  
(CONT.) going on one side and they've got the same  
guy going also. They're working in two  
different directions. But it doesn't make  
any difference to, that Ervin has  
already--he hadn't made a, a formal  
announcement. But, he's, he's put the word  
out that he isn't going to run. So, uh,  
(unintelligible) that we have competition.  
We still want to keep the heat on, not just  
on that, but the point is, until he formally  
isn't going to run, if you can get some guys  
like Gardiner going, who are, who are  
irresponsible, you may be able to start  
destroying the Ervin myth a little bit...

PRESIDENT: That's the point.

HALDEMAN: ...while he is still a potential runner,  
even if he doesn't run.

PRESIDENT: Well, also, you have (unintelligible) a  
fellow who's (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) to work with him, he's  
petrified.

HALDEMAN: That, that--

PRESIDENT: And, he doesn't say much.

HALDEMAN: We've got to give Ervin some trouble, no  
question about that, but, but scaring him  
off with election notices isn't going to do  
it, apparently.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Kleindienst scaring him  
off, except to say that, well, he'll learn,  
he's probably going to, you know, convince  
himself (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, the theory, the theory of the Ervin analysis is that what he's trying to do is go out and place authority. He wants to, he knows that he'll go down hill if he runs any more this (unintelligible). The action he was after, cheerfully is once he got interested he, he then began analyzing--

PRESIDENT: Just a little (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Precisely.

PRESIDENT: We'll, uh,--

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Right. Right. Well, getting back to what we do here, uh, what, uh, what do you have in mind, uh, the eventual (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: Well, I think we, we've gotta lay out the--

PRESIDENT: One thing is very, as I told you, is extremely important. We've gotta, we have to (unintelligible) in the sense that (unintelligible) responsibility on, a little more on Dean. He's got all office an--all that, uh, and apparently his responsibility on this--

HALDEMAN: He can't use the office for most of this. He uses them to do his other work so that he works out--they're sort of covering the base and providing the front for him so -that he's--

PRESIDENT: Here's the thing, I think, I think,-- this concerns me, Bob. (Unintelligible) from Hunt and, uh, then, of course, we're trying to figure how we're going to cut it out. Why (unintelligible) cut it out without hurting, killing a lot of people. Have trouble (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: That may be what you have to do.

PRESIDENT: Now? Well, I don't know. The point is...

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HALDEMAN: Then Dean, then Dean...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...his argument is those people are going to be killed anyway,...

PRESIDENT: Well, that's the point.

HALDEMAN: ...why not kill them with a...

PRESIDENT: Dean

HALDEMAN: ...clean bullet now?

PRESIDENT: ...Dean goes...

HALDEMAN: And leave the, leave the

PRESIDENT: Dean goes down the line and, and, and then the line is, uh, (unintelligible). He gets, uh, for example, it appears to me that it's, if you really want to look at the thing, it's, uh,--And he said completely the opposite. He says that he's involved. He, he--and-I said why the hell, how, how, how are you involved? He said because he was aware of and participated in the obstruction of justice by reason of the fact that, uh, he was aware of the fact that they were, uh, they had a fund to take care of these various defendants. I don't believe that that is going to be something that is going to set Dean, myself, you know what I mean. That's, uh, well, when Dean ran the fund to--he didn't hand out the money. Others did.

HALDEMAN: We, John and I worked on that with him. Perhaps he thinks I'm tied into that too because of this, in a sense, my fund that he was taking.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, I, I, that's the kind of thing I'd kind of like to get...

HALDEMAN: What?

PRESIDENT: ...out of the way.

HALDEMAN: Okay, but, we're very clear on that, except this concern is what they do on the other side. What happened was that is they, they needed the money

PRESIDENT: Right

HALDEMAN: ...They were supposed to be getting it themselves from other sources, from other Cubans and all that kind of crap...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...So, they got back to a crunch once in a while when a guy had to have another \$3,000 or something, or, or he was gonna blow, blow--

PRESIDENT: Then, who did it? Dean? That's what worries him.

HALDEMAN: No. Then what happened--was, the only, see they knew over there that the only money there was that was useable was this 350,000.

PRESIDENT: Who's they, who's they?

HALDEMAN: LaRue and Mitchell.

PRESIDENT: Okay.

HALDEMAN: And so, Mitchell said, "You've got to use that money." So, I said, "Turn the whole thing back to 'em. We don't want the money anyway. Give just enough, I've been looking for a way to get rid of it." I'll admit I was, I was worried about this, this money. I wanted to get it back into the, where it belonged. Uh, so, so, he gave it back to them, and they wouldn't take, Mitchell wouldn't let them take it back, but he did say "You've got to use some of it." So Dean told Strachan, who was the guy that had the...



PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...the physical possession to give X thousand dollars to LaRue. So, Strachan would go and open his safe, take out X thousand dollars and, and go trudging over to LaRue's, aaid, and this is all after the election, this is in the--

PRESIDENT: After the election?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, on the, yeah, and this in--

PRESIDENT: Oh, after the election.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. And he would go over and give LaRue...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...X thousand dollars and, and, we can certainly claim that, that Strachan had no knowledge of what that was for--he was carrying out Dean's instructions; that Dean was carrying out instructions from me; and you've gotta prove it for me. And my point there was, it's their money, give it back to 'em, give it all back to 'em. So we were giving--

PRESIDENT: The way I would, the way I was going to say about it, of course, on the money was (unintelligible). First, what was it? The money was money that was, was collected without regard to the campaign laws at all...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was in cash. It was for the purpose of taking polls and surveys, and so forth, prior to that, and so forth...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was not used. After the election it was a surplus...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was turned back...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...Period. Right?

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Now, what happened to it after that? Do we have to account for what happened to that money after the election?

HALDEMAN: Well--

PRESIDENT: If it was used to pay campaign bills--

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Somebody has to. We don't have to, but the campaign has to

PRESIDENT: Somebody has to what, now?

HALDEMAN: ...The campaign has to account for it.

PRESIDENT: But it wasn't collected in the cam--

HALDEMAN: But they still have to account for--it was, it was cash on hand at the time of the campaign. No it wasn't, 'cause they got rid of it

PRESIDENT: Not in the campaign, not in the camp-- My point is, I would not treat that, I, that, in my view, was

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible.)

PRESIDENT: ...not campaign funds. That was campaign--that was not given for a campaign at all. These were funds that were, that were, shall we say, collected after the 1968 elections and had nothing to do with any campaign law, was not campaign funds, you know, for, for any purpose. They wanted to know--what did they poll? They polled uh, what happened to Goldwater, what happened on the meat prices--

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HALDEMAN: Yes sir. Issue, issue polls.

PRESIDENT: Issue polls

HALDEMAN: And the

PRESIDENT: ...and the rest. The study that you made...

HALDEMAN: ...geographic analysis--

PRESIDENT: ...and after that they returned it over to the Campaign Committee.

HALDEMAN: It was a gift to the Campaign Committee.

PRESIDENT: Well I don't, I don't know. Anyway, it's a problem, and that's--if Dean sees that, it's a problem because the question will be asked. Dean is very good this way. You saw how the next question would be, quack, quack, quack, quack.

HALDEMAN: Well, it's a potential problem. If, if-- Dean is inordinately worried about that problem because it does involve him.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...his view, and we, this is what we were talking about, I mentioned to you last night on the phone...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...his view that, putting...

PRESIDENT: The White House--

HALDEMAN: ...the wagons around the White House. And Dean's point is, when you get down to it, the White House literally doesn't have any problem prior to the Watergate break-in. And, in other words, there was n-, there was no White House involvement in the Watergate, he's satisfied. That, that--

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PRESIDENT: Even Colson?

HALDEMAN: He's satisfied with that.

PRESIDENT: He thinks that telephone call, that's the one where...

HALDEMAN: You see that's--yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...Colson has Liddy and Hunt in his office and calls Magruder and says, "Get off your ass and do something."

HALDEMAN: Well, but, but, he argues that, that wasn't necessarily...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, and probably, and maybe...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...in reality, wasn't knowledge...

PRESIDENT: I guess, but that--

HALDEMAN: ...of the operation.

PRESIDENT: I, I don't know--

HALDEMAN: Now, he did know there was an intelligence apparatus.

PRESIDENT: I recall, (unintelligible) the ITT thing. I can imagine Chuck and how he was. Hell, he'd go on for an hour about what he was trying to do, like that, and it wasn't like, that he was trying to get a counter offensive. I don't know what he was trying to do.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. That's when he was playing Teddy Kennedy stuff. He was--

PRESIDENT: That's right. Damn most (unintelligible). But, uh, well, anyway, I guess that--

HALDEMAN: Dean's point is the only place that the White House is culpable...

PRESIDENT: Yes.

HALDEMAN: ...in this thing...

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

HALDEMAN: ...in any criminal basis...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...or any real basis...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...is in the potential charge of obstruction of justice after the fact--that we have no problem with the crime itself.

PRESIDENT: Right, and on that one he says, why don't we just say we turned over the money?

HALDEMAN: And I don't see why we're even, uh--it, it--so, so the money is used for su-, support stuff for defendants

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...Why is that obstruction of justice anyway?

PRESIDENT: Well, particularly when it's not to sip champagne. I wouldn't say that, I guess maybe --

HALDEMAN: You may not have to get into that at all, see. He's just worried that you might get into it. And, and if you follow his containment line, the odds...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...he feels, and, and I feel strongly on this, are pretty good you won't get into it. He's just worried that there's a little lurking some (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Possibility (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...because somebody, well, because Hugh Sloan knows that the money was delivered here. That's really where it, what it boils down to.

PRESIDENT: Hugh Sloan knows it.

HALDEMAN: Or if you put Gordon Strachan...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...up before a Grand Jury...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...if they ask the right question Gordon will never volunteer. He's a lawyer and he's...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...smart...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, he'll pull--

PRESIDENT: But he must not, he must not perjure himself.

HALDEMAN: ...But, if you get Gordon to a point where they say, "Was there any money?"...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...somehow...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...he may, they may get him into where--

PRESIDENT: But this had already been, some had been used yet, -is it our money (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: No. Well, yeah, but never a fund over here...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...only that there -- that Stans had this fund in his, in his safe, which he did, which, of course, he would have. He had a cash fund in his, in his safe. It was used for, for various payments and that's where--

PRESIDENT: As far as this is concerned, this is, is, I'd, I'd say constructively that Stans is clean. Now, to go on to, did you ever sign any (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't know. I didn't, I never saw him. I never had a thing to do with the situation.

PRESIDENT: There was nothing in writing involved in it.

HALDEMAN: Well, Strachan may have had to sign a receipt when he took (unintelligible) uh, --

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, what it was was that money...

PRESIDENT: I know.

HALDEMAN: ...that we had left over from '70, 'member we collected all our cash in '70...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...And, we told 'em not to spend all of it if they didn't have to. We ended up, we had a--and it was probably '68 surplus that we used in '70 and carried over...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...(Unintelligible) of course.

PRESIDENT: Why don't we just say on this money...

HALDEMAN: The money (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...Kalmbach's money (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Kalmbach.

PRESIDENT: ...was to be used, this was to be used for various candidates but was never used.

HALDEMAN: It was to be used for candidate support and research.

PRESIDENT: For candidate support and research. It was never used, turned over to the Committee at the end of the campaign. What they did with it is their problem.

HALDEMAN: That had been collected in years prior to 1971.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Very simple.

HALDEMAN: Which is true, also. At least that was my understanding of that. Now, the problem is that, I think those funds got mixed together and we never got all the money.

PRESIDENT: Really?

HALDEMAN: 'Cause they told us we couldn't...

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: ...make a (unintelligible). Uh--

PRESIDENT: They didn't use what they thought they did. Anyway, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) they thought they needed it. It was their point that under the laws there was no way we could, we could use it--which they were right.

PRESIDENT: Which we never did.



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HALDEMAN: There really wasn't. There wasn't even a way we could use what we had.

PRESIDENT: What you, what you mean is that you didn't do a thing with the money, which is good.

HALDEMAN: See, I had the money, I was going to use it to pay for polls (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) you did the polling through, uh,--

HALDEMAN: ...but they said they had the money to pay for it and they needed, they needed places to show where they spend money, so they, so they paid for the bills.

PRESIDENT: I would say that looking at the, at the reed thing,,now--Ehrlichman, for example, uh, he gets to him, uh,--

HALDEMAN: Not on Watergate.

PRESIDENT: No, but he gets to him on the, uh, on the, uh, Hunt, if Hunt, with Hunt's, uh,--

HALDEMAN: But John doesn't think it does. It gets to Krogh.

PRESIDENT: Well, that bothers me.

HALDEMAN: It, and it clearly does, then it gets to David Young, and David Young is a weaker reed than Krogh.

PRESIDENT: H-H-Has Young, uh, also lied? They both--

HALDEMAN: Well, they haven't gotten to Young yet, I don't think. I shouldn't say that 'cause I don't know, I don't know.

PRESIDENT: But, what were Young and...

HALDEMAN: It's my impression that they...

PRESIDENT: ...what were Young and--Krogh didn't, Krogh hit a critical question in his case, apparently, said he didn't know the Cubans (unintelligible). Now how does he get out of that? Has anybody thought of that?

HALDEMAN: Well, Ehrlich-, Ehrlichman's view on-it is--which kind of surprises me-- is to be cold-blooded. Yesterday he said, "When Krogh gets finished with his lying--" he said, "Now I (unintelligible)" They said they know Krogh.

PRESIDENT: It's a convicted felon against his word.

HALDEMAN: Well, plus, they may not say-anything. You, you still--the Cubans seem to be the least matter of concern. They're, they're fanatics and they don't seem to really be too concerned about their pulling the load and their needs are, are fairly minimal, and Dean confirms again that Liddy, Liddy is enjoying, Liddy's in jail, he, he didn't...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...stay out, he, he said, "I want to start serving my term," and he's at, at, uh, Danbury and thoroughly enjoying it. He's a little strange.

PRESIDENT: That son-of-a-bitch of a judge gave him 35 years --

HALDEMAN: He may enjoy that. As long as he thinks we're gonna deal something up for him someday when he -- it's incredibly-- He's got five kids, and all he's concerned about is that there's enough income to take care of his kids and that's being taken care of right now by his father. And his lawyer's got something worked out.

PRESIDENT: God damn it, the people are in jail, it's only right for people to raise the money for them. I got to let them do that and that's all there is to it. I think we ought to. There's got to be funds. I'm not being, I don't mean to be blackmailed by Hunt, that goes too far, but we're taking care of these people that are in jail. My God, they did this for--we're sorry for them. We do it out of compassion and I didn't (unintelligible) the Cuban fund and the people that contribute to it didn't have to report on that damn thing. There's no report requirement or any kind of requirement. You don't agree? What else should we do?

HALDEMAN: That's why I--it seems to me that there's no real problem on obstruction of justice as far as Dean's concerned, I mean--it, it doesn't seem to me that we are obstructing justice, for Christ sake. The people--

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...pled guilty...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...when a guy goes and pleads guilty, are you obstructing justice?

PRESIDENT: When you help his--

HALDEMAN: His argument is, when you read the law, that the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...that, uh--

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but, Dean didn't do it. Dean, I don't think, I don't think Dean had anything to do with, uh, the obstruction. He didn't deliver the money or, that's the point. I think what really set him off was when, uh, Hunt's lawyer was off at this party and said Hunt needs a \$120,000. Well, that was, that was a very, that was a, that was a shot across the bow. You understand, that that would have constituted God-damn blackmail if Dean had gotten the money and never--You see what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Let's come to the other... We, when you talk about the wagons around-the White House, Bob, what, what really happens here is that, uh, we really have to take a hard look at the situation and realize that, (unintelligible). I don't think that we can, uh--has anybody candidly suggested that Magruder was not aware (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't think so. I don't, I don't, I don't know, but I, I have, my opin-- I have no knowledge, my opinion is that he knew

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...And, uh, from the way he talks I'm, I'm thoroughly convinced of that. Dean is thoroughly convinced that he knew.

PRESIDENT: Always pull through. (Tape noise) It's Magruder's word against the others and he said he didn't.

HALDEMAN: Well, nobody said he did.

PRESIDENT: Well, did he (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh, yeah, but not--they haven't testified (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Speaking now, speaking now of what Dean tells me--yes, that's what I'm going to do this afternoon--and, and Dean tells me things have gotten out of control; and he says well (unintelligible) and asked him how Magruder was doing and Dean said Magruder perjured himself. Well, it's pretty rough. I'd say well, with that knowledge can I appoint Magruder to a position in government? That's the problem, you see (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You didn't appoint him to a position in the White House.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I hired him out. I'd say...

HALDEMAN That's exactly why we didn't let him get into anything that was a Presidential appointment. And you can also argue-that we should have told the Secretary of Commerce. On the other hand, we don't, we can't prove he perjured himself, that's Dean's opinion.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

-HALDEMAN: Well, Magruder, anyway, that's, we went that route for exactly that reason.

PRESIDENT: No. No. We didn't.

HALDEMAN: But, the other side of that coin is, if you're--unless you decide to throw Magruder to the wolves, you need to keep Magruder on as even a keel as you can. If you decide to throw him to the wolves, uh, (unintelligible) kind of problem, he's not a guy, he's not a Liddy type. He's exactly the opposite.

PRESIDENT: If you decided to throw him to the wolves, what does that (unintelligible)? You wouldn't say anything (unintelligible). I mean, the point is, the point is we say that we have found that Magruder (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: No. We don't have anybody who can even testify on Watergate, 'cause we don't have anybody who knows anything about it.

PRESIDENT: Except possibly Colson, and that's just a big possibility, possible. Yet, I don't, I don't. I don't agree that nobody else would know. Strachan?

HALDEMAN: Well, that's right. Keep forgetting about Strachan. And Gord--uh, what's his name, Dean says he's going to (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: What we do with getting information in sort of a--he may not have known about how we're--you know what I mean. I think Strachan is, is not that bad if his-fish is gonna get fried. He's at too low a level.

HALDEMAN: That's a good sign, I know it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) he got a tremendous amount Of--he just got information, but he didn't issue-orders or anything on what he wanted to do.

HALDEMAN: Right. You look at Gordon Strachan. Here's a little, young lawyer, who used to work for John Mitchell in his law firm, and came-down to Washington to work in the government, and he's working under a campaign with Attorney General of the United States is in charge of it. Now, how the hell do you expect him to decide whether something that's being done is right or wrong?

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: I don't know, I don't think, (Gordon doesn't I don't think, doesn't worry Dean much and he doesn't worry, I don't, I would not be concerned about Gordon. He is--

PRESIDENT: A hell of a guy.

HALDEMAN: You never know about anybody. You know, I would have never thought that Navy aide would have a nervous breakdown.

PREMENT: Didn't you? (Unintelligible) can 'sure be wrong in picking people that--

HALDEMAN: Uh, Gordon is a guy I wouldn't worry about. But, Magruder is a guy I would. Because Magruder is loaded with ego, personal pride, political ambition, uh...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...I make it this way: He's had some major success as a young guy, he's, you know, a, a boy wonder...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...and, uh, that kind of guy is, uh,--

PRESIDENT: How does John answer the Ellsberg thing? That's the other point I wanted to raise, that, uh, John seems to say well,--

HALDEMAN: He says, "I didn't know anything about it." He, he says, "I didn't think they, I--"

PRESIDENT: Talked about the (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: No, he didn't. He says he didn't find out about that.

PRESIDENT: Krogli, Krogh did. But, what, what was, what were we doing at that meeting (unintelligible) is the whole point (unintelligible)? I'm rather curious to know myself.

HALDEMAN: Well, you better ask John, 'cause I don't really know. All I know is--

PRESIDENT: All I know is that, I think it was part of that whole operation of John and Young, where we were just looking into the whole business of leaks. Henry was in on that. Henry must be aware of some of that. I've got to--

HALDEMAN: What they--the enterprise out of there, which is the key thing--that, that Hunt, you see, Hunt--, what Hunt says is that he'll uncover some of the sleazy work he did for Ehrlichman. He said particularly remind him of the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...of the...

PRESIDENT: That's Ellsberg's affair. That's what Dean told me.

HALDEMAN: Alright, and the Ellsberg affair--

PRESIDENT: Yeah, what happened?

HALDEMAN: I'm not sure what happened, but it has something to do with they sent Hunt out, and I guess the Cubans

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...to break in...

PRESIDENT: To a doctor's office.

HALDEMAN: ...to a psychiatrist's office to get a report...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...on Ellsberg's mental analysis or something like that, and they bungled, bungled the break-in. They didn't get what they were supposed to get or something, and then they came back and said could they go back again and that request got to Ehrlichman, and he said, "Absolutely not," he says. And they didn't, apparently. That's---

PRESIDENT: Why did they want a report on (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't know, but they had--there was a lot of stuff. They had a lot of interesting stuff on Ellsberg that showed he was, that was--we got some of it.

PRESIDENT: What was the purpose of it though? I mean, to discredit--?



HALDEMAN: I forgot--Yes. (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) make a spy out of him, and, uh...

PRESIDENT: Oh, I see.

HALDEMAN: Uh, uh--

PRESIDENT: Did, did, uh, it make him look as bad after all that national security was involved and so forth?

HALDEMAN: Well

PRESIDENT: I'm not sure I (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: And why were we using private people? Because the question, there was a valid, or, a real question here as to where the CIA and the FBI fit into it.

PRESIDENT: Also, whether they were leaking--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) because things were leaking from all over.

PRESIDENT: They were leaking from all over and somebody had to find a way...

HALDEMAN: And it had to be done independently.

PRESIDENT: It had to be done independently because of possibility of, uh, leakage.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: I don't know whether that'll hold up. (Unintelligible) that doesn't make it legal

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PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) again. If you come back, why --

HALDEMAN: That's a long stretched out (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I'm trying to get down to the end of the point, that the man who knows all this is Hunt...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: So, Hunt becomes rather important.

HALDEMAN: Probably.

PRESIDENT: And Dean's line, Bob, if we want--

HALDEMAN: Dean's point on that one is that--

PRESIDENT: Dean would say that he'd just cut that off (unintelligible). That's what you really come down to. Or you, you give him \$120,000 or at least give him another contact, you know what I mean? That's, that's a lot of dough. Let's face it, in terms, uh, in terms, uh, of pardon, uh, or so forth, if, if Colson is talking, uh, of a pardon, uh, Christmas, you know, right after the fact that the court, that they're convicted, or either before they're sentenced-- he's out of his mind. He knows we can't do that.

HALDEMAN: But if Hunt thinks that's what he's been promised...

PRESIDENT: He'll shut up now.

HALDEMAN: He'll, he may shut up now.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but my point is--

HALDEMAN: But, what, what do you do at Christmas time?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's right. And the question is, the question is that now, it seems to me you'd better find out from Colson what he did promise. (Unintelligible) Don't you think so?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But you've got to go about that before he's sentenced. (tape noise) a pardon. Well, what that would be a --

HALDEMAN: But not if you get the Parole Board to, uh-- A pardon might be, an early pardon, an early parole might not, if you get the Parole Board to...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...look at the point that the sentence was, was, uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...way out of proportion to the, to the--

PRESIDENT: Well, the point is that--Dean says that, that's why he's thinking of using Petersen. He says that, and Ehrlichman agrees, that the judge has the power to sentence him without parole, and that's a rough son-of-a-bitch, it seems to me for something like this, on the ground that they didn't talk about it, you see. Might make it tough to, to pardon him. I think it would be curtains for him for that (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: But the point, the moral of it is that he doesn't -- we don't know what Sirica's gonna (unintelligible). Again, Dean looks at the, what might be the worst. It may not be the worst.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Laughter) In fact what usually happens is something beyond what you thought was the worst.

PRESIDENT: Well, on the wagons theory, uh, that, what, what does that mean, I wonder, to put the wagons up around the White House. I mean that--who do you let down the tube? Do you let Magruder down?

HALDEMAN: You don't intentionally, you leave Magruder-- what you do is, is you, see, we're, we're doing stuff now. We're keeping quiet and, and, uh, all that...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...just try and cov--and, and putting up this money and, and everything else. We're trying to keep--when you get right down to it, as Dean says--the only White House guilt, culpability, is in the cover-up...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and what, what's the purpose of the cover-up, to protect the White House? No, it protects some individuals of the Committee.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell, Magruder.

HALDEMAN: And the question then is how, what individuals, how far up does it go, that you're protecting? And we've already, we're not protecting Liddy, so we, we (unintelligible) so, we got to talk to him. Uh, the question is, can it, can, if you, you could--his idea is you separate, you look at the Committee as one thing, the White House as another.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: The White House has no guilt in the Watergate thing.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: So, you come up with wagons around the White House, and you just, you just turn it up, you, you do whatever you do, issue

HALDEMAN: statements, issue a new statement, well,  
(CONT.) well, whatever, to totally cut off the White House from the, from the, the whole Watergate business. Now, at the same time you do that, it might be, we haven't gotten to this, but, it might be, you also have to do the Segretti thing and, to a degree, implicate the White House, which is...

PRESIDENT: That's---

HALDEMAN: ...fine. There must be a decent statement (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I, I don't, uh, I don't know how you feel about that...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...or a statement, or a--

HALDEMAN: There has to be something. That's right.

PRESIDENT: Or do you agree?

HALDEMAN: Uh, no, I think you do, I think they do.

PRESIDENT: I think we need, uh, I mean, let me say, let me put it, I have a certain balance (unintelligible) that Dean's statement, or the Moore's statement, or what have you, sure will (unintelligible) and so forth, but it's better to have something rather than nothing. You know what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Well, but then the questions that that raises are-- they can successfully do that, but, can you, are you any better off if the White House is clean but your Campaign Committee's dirty, or if, if, if we cut the whole thing off.

PRESIDENT: That's not what I was referring to.

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HALDEMAN: In other words, we need (unintelligible) the Campaign Committee and (unintelligible) the White House. First of all is that believable? Uh, happens to be true, but can it be convincing? Uh, uh--

PRESIDENT: Well, that, well, they, what you're --

HALDEMAN: And Dean--if they get, if they get as high as Magruder, probably it doesn't hurt too much. If they get to Mitchell...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...uh, he's awfully close to you.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: He's not as close to you as Ehrlichman and, I guess, that Dean and Haldeman now, which (unintelligible). Mitchell will find a way out. You have to let them get to him, I think. But, Dean's thought, I think what convinced him to put the wagons around the White House is that it forces Mitchell to take the responsibility rather than allowing Mitchell to hide under the blanket of the White House, which he's been doing, and I think Dean feels that that's And, and in a way, it does Colson too, uh, who's out. lie feels that, that Mitchell and Colson can take care of themselves.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I don't know. But the, the, the problem is Magruder can't take care of himself, except with this straight line-- his, his present, uh, position...

PRESIDENT:       Yep.

HALDEMAN:        ...and see whether he can, can make it stick. Now, they may be able to hang him on that...

PRESIDENT:       They'll kill him.

HALDEMAN:        ...but still, it will get to, to a question. They may be able to indict him if they get other people to talk, but can they, can they--

PRESIDENT:       They'll convict him.

HALDEMAN:        ...beyond a reasonable doubt? Maybe not, if, if he stays with his line, they may not be able to convict him. Then Magruder indicted and winning, uh, acquittal, may be a pretty good route for us to go. We won't know unless we try. And they're, what'll you do if they call us? We can't not go there again. And if I were the prosecutor, well, that decision, it's the Justice Department that prosecutes that, so maybe -we can control the prosecution and not call 'em.

PRESIDENT:       Well...

HALDEMAN:        But there again, at least if you call us, we're under rules of evidence and, and...

PRESIDENT:       Right.

HALDEMAN:        ...oh, and germaneness.

PRESIDENT:       You've got lawyers who object, you can go to relevancy there.

HALDEMAN:        Yeah, and they can only...

PRESIDENT:       Go to relevancy, that's no problem there.

HALDEMAN: So they can't go fishing. And there is no problem, unless they get to Strachan and maybe start running that stream.

PRESIDENT: Another thought that has been raised is the idea that (unintelligible) things going wrong (unintelligible) a Special Counselor.

HALDEMAN: I don't know, not, not being a lawyer, I (unintelligible)-this kind of stuff, but, uh, Dean feels very strongly, and John Ehrlichman seems to concur, that it would, that we do need the advice of somebody who knows more about the criminal set-up than we do...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and they--

PRESIDENT: We, can't go to Petersen--

HALDEMAN: Well, they don't know Petersen's the guy. They wonder if, you know what we got into last night after we were in here, was the question of whether, I guess it was Dean, could call Petersen and just say we need advice. Can I talk to you on a, on a totally confidential basis, outside of school, and it will (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: You wouldn't do that, uh, through Kleindienst?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Kleindienst wouldn't (unintelligible) after you told him? I'm just, just asking.

HALDEMAN: I don't know. That, that, the way that we were talking, it's going...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...to have to either be, uh...



PRESIDENT: Right. Okay.

HALDEMAN: ...just straight bilateral...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN ...Dean to Petersen...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...or Dean would just say I'm over, I'm over my head on this...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, uh, I need counsel on an informal and totally confidential basis. Will you sit down and let me go through this with you? But it'd have, would have to be understood and it might--I recognize that you may be--can't do it because as the head of the Criminal Division it puts you on the other side. It can't be separated. Dean has the feeling that the more Petersen knows, the more helpful he can be, and that he will be.

PRESIDENT: I'm not sure that that's what you can count on.

HALDEMAN: I'm sure you can't count on it, because Petersen's another human being, too.

PRESIDENT: And he's a knowledgeable man.  
(Unintelligible) you stuck somebody  
(unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: But you don't know what his ambitions are and, uh--

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) and I just don't know.

HALDEMAN: Well, I know they're all possibilities, but apparently, all the way through this he's been a very solid rock.

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PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) problems?

HALDEMAN: The problems you got with Petersen is that he wants to go out in private practice with Kleindienst.

PRESIDENT: Well, I'd sooner take (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And if you didn't...

PRESIDENT: What are you (unintelligible) tell Kleindienst too?

HALDEMAN: I don't think that, if you're going to do this, you can't do it without Kleindienst

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: And I think here you just gotta (Unintelligible)

REEL TWO BEGINS

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I, I, I'll just call him and say (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Well, he used to, and I assume that that (Unintelligible) same ones, I think.

END OF REEL ONE

HALDEMAN, Uh, uh, he does.

PRESIDENT: Not very good?

HALDEMAN: Oh, it's gotta--it's some Of mostly the same old stuff. It's the Anderson and all, uh, crap, and, uh, uh--da, well there is, there's one thing that we could build up that would, that I think we could get built up that would be pretty good, which is about the extensive use of the FBI in the 1960, or 4, Democratic Convention and an attempt to use them in '68. There is also some cover-up on Walter Jenkins, and some instructions by Johnson to the FBI as to what they were to find when they were making this investigation and, uh--uh, I don't think we can use that, I mean, it isn't, that isn't--

PRESIDENT: Too nasty?

HALDEMAN: Ah. Then there's some Abe Fortas stuff they were involved with. That was intended (unintelligible) to use Fortas to implicate (unintelligible). As precise (unintelligible) he didn't like but there's a--I think you could blow a hell of a bombshell out of the, out of the '64 Democratic Convention---

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"B"**

HALDEMAN:

PRESIDENT: anything on the tapping or the watching the air bug and all that sort of...

HALDEMAN: Uh, the stuff on the air bug, we've gotten. Got DeLoach's stuff on that and all it is is that they did monitor the--

PRESIDENT: Telephone (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Not the, not the content--they only monitored te--they, they did the check on, uh, where, to what numbers were calls placed and then they, they, uh checked them out. Didn't get--

PRESIDENT: Our plane, our plane (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And only when it was on the ground. Not that I (unintelligible)--

PRESIDENT: Still, to what numbers did he place calls? Still bad--No, not bad...

HALDEMAN: You could, you could--

PRESIDENT: That's right--

HALDEMAN: You can distort them, that's the thing.  
(Unintelligible) Do what they do to us for  
Christ sake.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: (coughs) Come out with a story that Haldeman  
controlled the secret fund and then let us  
go back and say what secret fund are you...

PRESIDENT: You know, one fellow in this that--you  
should not mention Mitchell, ah--one fellow  
(Unintelligible) who'd be very good. He  
obviously, obviously doesn't  
(unintelligible) public position  
(unintelligible). The fellow, the best  
fellow would probably be Walsh. Had a lot  
of experience and he's one, hell of a lawyer  
and I respect him (unintelligible) He's  
totally incorruptible...

HALDEMAN: (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) Nevertheless not a, not a  
mean man (unintelligible). My problem is  
that I--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) a hostage (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Huh? Uh, what't the difference?

HALDEMAN: Well, we gotta--we're up against the crunch  
with him--ah, coming out--trying to move in  
on him.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) At least it's, uh  
(unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Course not.

PRESIDENT: What is it--PR?

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HALDEMAN: Yeah, and it's use...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...useful from...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...from a totally different (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...to develop strategy.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). I, I was gonna say, or I was thinking I, uh, I'd rather hang than I'd -- think that I'll just (unintelligible) -having to rely on somebody, the people (unintelligible) any more heat (unintelligible) Dean has told me everything I need to know. Now, I don't know where it all ends. Mitchell (unintelligible) and so forth and so on. And I am sure that we should be (unintelligible). Now the question is how to handle it. (unintelligible) if Mitchell would take some responsibility (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) comes out of this.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well --

HALDEMAN: Pick a few and, -ah...

PRESIDENT: Sure, I...

HALDEMAN: ...12:30

PRESIDENT: ...I'm available as soon as I finish my meetings, actually. I think 1:30 (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Be about the time we finish.

PRESIDENT: I guess so. That'll give you plenty of time (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Well, 12:30, actually.

PRESIDENT: Well, you know, and I have to eat something and I'll grab something to eat, get him to sign (unintelligible) and all that sort of thing so we'll back at it.

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HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: But in looking at it all, as you well realize we are not going to let this damn thing eat (unintelligible) and, uh. (Unintelligible) Remember cause I'm the one that (unintelligible) but ah, Bill Rogers and I (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh really?

PRESIDENT: Eisenhower was a pretty tough nut (unintelligible) which of course is a bad (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Oh, Mitchell's been delayed (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Huh? Oh, I see.

HALDEMAN: Just this morning--

PRESIDENT: Well --

HALDEMAN: I'm sorry.

PRESIDENT: You still got -- you see, that will give him eleven to -- what I would suggest is you eat, have lunch, ah, you know, about one o'clock (unintelligible) he won't here till about 1:30, how's that? That will give you a couple hours to--

HALDEMAN: I'll say this, that, uh

PRESIDENT: Sure. We, uh, we've gotta talk, go over what are the problems of the people just working their butts off for what they thought was the right cause, you know what I mean. And, uh, it was the problem of the (unintelligible) committee (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Jeb was, too, but (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: It was the little people, it wasn't -- you know what I mean? It involved different things, but I'm referring back to the Watergate. That was terribly stupid, uh, something which you, I would never have approved (unintelligible). Who the hell, who the hell would have done it? (Unintelligible) hire somebody to do a second story job? So, so that's, that's the case. It's--- on the other hand, for that reason, I, I do not want, to, I, uh, recognizing that (unintelligible), talk about where we'll cut the cancer out. Question is whether we really can. Question is whether, if you, if you cut a lot of heart out and so forth the patient can still be (unintelligible). You get my point?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I just don't know. I, I, I, I'm at stake. We've got to take the institution of the Presidency. we've got to, and, uh, the ability, mind you, to conduct, uh, ' policy with some confidence in it, you know, confidence in the office.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: We cannot allow this kind of thing to leave a, shall we say, a, sort of an aura which would hurt us, in that respect. Uh, let me say, I, I, I do not (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I don't think it's as bad as, as John is concerned that it is. on the other side of the cancer analogy is that you can go in and cut out all of what you think is cancerous...

PRESIDENT: Still there.

HALDEMAN: ...and discover that uh, that uh, it wasn't malignant. And if you, you, ya, cut off two legs and a breast, when you didn't need to...wrong way.

PRESIDENT: Maybe you cut off the wrong leg.

HALDEMAN: ...or the wrong leg, you know, and, uh--

PRESIDENT: See the point is, if the cancer thing was a sure thing then we might have to consider that. On the other hand since it is a risky thing, at best, in other words that we're not sure, my view is that you're next best thing is to take a position of, uh, continuing to be as forthcoming as possible, put out a, and put out a, a sort of statement and just sort of fight it out and drag through. (unintelligible) Mitchell (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I wish we could be forthcoming on the Segretti (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I considered that, Bob, I considered (unintelligible)



HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) get back to the wall.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I don't think our set of assumptions fit John's. That ah, I think the tougher part of all this -- which was, ah, this FBI investigation, Grand Jury investigation and then the trial, and that the Senate thing won't (unintelligible) will be less of a problem, partly because everything's all laid out.

PRESIDENT: Everything's ducky.

HALDEMAN: Everything's all established, and, ah, the characters have rehearsed their parts. And, uh, it's a matter of (unintelligible) and all that kind of stuff, and, uh, that they'll hold.

PRESIDENT: John's concern there is that the Senate (unintelligible) secretaries-, and stenographers, press. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: But they, they'll blow it up. They'll blow it up if there's anything in it at all. They've proven that. They blow it up. They blow the same story up every week, anyway. No question that they're blowing it up. John's...

PRESIDENT: Why not?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Well, it's, if you go the other way, if you, if you do the cancer thing, that'll blow up they'll blow that out too. They'll blow the hell out of that. Anything you do -- John says fire some people, and I said well, who do you fire?

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PRESIDENT: Yeah. Right. That's right.

HALDEMAN: You -- and, I don't know. You go back, there's nobody in the White House that, that's fireable.

PRESIDENT: Well, in the Government, it could be Strachan, and, uh--

HALDEMAN: And Magruder.

PRESIDENT: Magruder.

HALDEMAN: Neither of them were hired by you.

PRESIDENT: I know it.

HALDEMAN: So -- they both work in the Executive Branch, you could say that they're not the calibre of people we want to continue in the Executive Branch, so you'll fire them. Then, then you got a problem, I think, with Magruder. (Unintelligible) I don't think Magruder can hang anybody (unintelligible) I don't think he would hang Mitchell for some reason. I would guess who he'd go for is Colson.

PRESIDENT: Colson (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: He might go for me, for leverage, but he'd have a problem there. He could get, apparently, uh--

PRESIDENT: He wouldn't go for --

HALDEMAN: He could get Gordon, too.

PRESIDENT: That's right. And I think he could get Colson, because Colson (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: No. That's different, but he -- Colson called him about that matter.

HALDEMAN: That's right, -- which I didn't and you know...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: He now thinks I did, I guess. The (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Well, anyway...

HALDEMAN: No question about --

PRESIDENT: The point is (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And Colson says he knows he did it, too.

PRESIDENT: Who was that? Colson, I believe who had the call --

HALDEMAN: I think he denies knowledge of, of what the process...

PRESIDENT: The call--

HALDEMAN: ...was by which there -- he get the information that he received.

PRESIDENT: Colson didn't discuss (unintelligible). Dean is the one who said, "No". -- and Mitchell, too -- "You can't do that." (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: There was another bone, apparently, be-because (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: I must say, the only thing I would like to see is, uh, that, uh (unintelligible) the Presidency with some kind of a statement on the whole business, including Segretti, and uh, and frankly give them the (unintelligible). Give them a bone.

HALDEMAN: Except there, Dean argues -- and I don't see how it hangs -- Dean argues you'd get Chapin on a criminal indictment.

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PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: See, he's found another criminal indictment which has to do with the obstruction of the political process.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) but you can't, but you can't put out a statement --

HALDEMAN: I'm not sure you can indict him. I don't really see why you can't put the whole thing out (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: But you see, why, that is, maybe (unintelligible) just put out that statement to the effect that we were not involved in this, that, and the other, and so forth. (Unintelligible) look forward and we will cooperate (unintelligible) offer again. Period. (Unintelligible)

(Ticking sound)

HALDEMAN: How I am on all of this, that is, if you're still -- I don't know now, I'm, I'm confused in my own mind, and I think everybody is a little bit -- categories of information -- is what has been printed in the press and therefore is the mental public facts...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Or presumed public facts...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...Then there is a category which is the testimony, under oath, that's been given in executive session and to the Grand Jury and in private...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...interrogation by the FBI...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: that ah, is fact as stated by participants but that has not yet become public. There's still a little of that, I think. And then there's the third category which is the actual fact...

PRESIDENT: The facts are.

HALDEMAN: ...which has not been covered in testimony or public coverage and you almost need to set up three columns on each question, each item...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and look at those three things and then see what you're dealing with there. Because you may find, as you break that down, that what's the actual fact isn't any worse than either the sworn secret facts or the public facts and that you're better off to move the actual out across the line here.

PRESIDENT: All right -- now -- How can you move the actual out. That puts, uh, that comes back to (unintelligible) the thing we assured most people (unintelligible) to the Grand...

HALDEMAN: Part of the Grand Jury.

PRESIDENT: ...that their -- how do you want to handle it? (Unintelligible). Maybe that's the problem. I don't know. That's another thing (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I think that it-then Dean's afraid you then-- that's what sets you for getting into the obstruction of justice. Plus you --

PRESIDENT: I see. (Unintelligible) did his job very well (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Hell, yes, that's -- the worst thing we could do is take some step and then wonder why we didn't think of other things.

PRESIDENT: What?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT:       Yep.  But what --

HALDEMAN:        We'll have --

PRESIDENT:       We'll have'em there, you know, we'll have, we'll have to have at least (unintelligible) and, uh, and also (unintelligible).  The biggest danger on all this really is that (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN:        I think that we could, but I don't think we're out -- well, what's the danger of having a speech?

PRESIDENT:       Well, you know, (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN:        Not on television...

PRESIDENT:       (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN:        (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT:       (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN:        Do you have what you need for a -- are you, are you going to do a press conference next week, or a speech?'  Are you still hanging fire on that?

PRESIDENT:       No, I'm set.

HALDEMAN:        Do you want any material for the weekend...

PRESIDENT:       No.

HALDEMAN:        ...either way?

PRESIDENT:       I've decided that, uh, if I do a press conference (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN:        The question, uh, with the Congress, if you go on, I mean, Tuesday may be too soon -- from, from the Vietnam viewpoint.  If they pull the prisoners, the prisoners, where, and, and the troops out (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT:       (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN:        Better wait and see (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT:       The prisoners, oh, the prisoners (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Oh -- Okay then, you don't need any, any other raw data for the, for the Congressional speech, and if you do the, press conference, it would be Thursday so you wouldn't need the briefing book til...

PRESIDENT: Monday or Tuesday.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Okay. (Unintelligible) As far as the raw data is concerned (unintelligible) and so forth and so on. I mean I, I'm, I'm just, I'm gonna have to sit and think it through...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...Come up with a plan (unintelligible) come up (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: I think that (unintelligible) (Noises)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I think it's the best thing to do...

HALDEMAN: I do too.

PRESIDENT: ...I think it's better than trying to go before a press conference...

HALDEMAN: I do too.

PRESIDENT: ...and the other possibility is to not do anything (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That's what this, God-damn Watergate stuff-- Pat Gray's stuff and all this crap -- it's not the people's obsession. So you will be talking about a subject that, that they want to talk about instead of (unintelligible) Congress.

PRESIDENT: You get -- Congress you're all right. The point if I want a press conference that's what'd be.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: It'd probably -- if I don't do the Congress, in other words, go ahead at night press conference, it's not a good idea to (unintelligible) next week. Don't you agree with that?

HALDEMAN: I, that's probably so. Yeah.

PRESIDENT: You know, we'd just badger, beleaguer people to understand it. Know what I mean? (Unintelligible) escalate the issue. There's a hell of a lot more here (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I think, unfortunately, I think that's probably right

PRESIDENT: Well, let's fact it. We, we've done this (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Unless you want the chance to hit those issues -- which was the other--

PRESIDENT: Impossible.

HALDEMAN: Well, uh (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Hit Watergate and Segretti--

HALDEMAN: Yourself, yeah. But then we gotta get something...

PRESIDENT: This isn't the right -- it, it -- I don't believe it's the right time yet. My view of the right time on that is once the Ervin Committee starts, oversteps, or something like that. In other words, when it's in -- let me put it this way to you Bob: when a subject is of major concern, and the people are interested, I can go on and knock the hell out of them.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I should not be the one to take a negative subject...



HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...and make it one of major concern.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Now, ah, that's the type thing, I think that's a very good theory, but not a great one.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. My argument...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...the argument against that would be, uh...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...it would be to your advantage to get on the record before they do so that you're not on the defensive (unintelligible) but I don't think--

PRESIDENT: To be perfectly candid with you, uh. You're going to be on the defensive, come hell or high water...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...I mean, look at the last time out, I was on the defensive all the time.

HALDEMAN: Exactly.

PRESIDENT: And it's better--

HALDEMAN: Especially in a press conference, if you don't want be on the defensive...

PRESIDENT: I think...

HALDEMAN: ...the way to do it is in a...

PRESIDENT: ...I think...

HALDEMAN: ...a statement.

PRESIDENT: ...I think the press conference (unintelligible). That type of press conference will help, even though I was on the defensive, but we got out points across. Do you not agree?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But I don't think a national press conference being on the defensive (unintelligible) does help. That's my view, you see.

HALDEMAN: Well, it, it, s-, it bangs into the public mind...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...the President being badgered...

PRESIDENT: Beleagured.

HALDEMAN: ...uh, uh, about Watergate.

PRESIDENT: So ah -- which is one of those things. I do think that we (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) going out, I mean the press conference (unintelligible/**REMOVED**)

HALDEMAN: Certainly.

PRESIDENT: ...and, uh, they've all been televised.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) need to do a press conference of any kind.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). Right. The question is whether we want (unintelligible) that's why the speech to the Congress -- do something with regard to a what the difficulties (unintelligible) a-little harsh (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: No (unintelligible) just turn it the other way. Just say the cost of living last week went up That's exactly the point I'm trying to make this is what pol-, what I'm fighting.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: If you hang it out (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, you might.

HALDEMAN: That's why you vetoed the vocational rehabilitation (unintelligible).

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PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Unintelligible) thing is appealing at the moment and I, and I might do it -- (unintelligible) going right up the wall. If I do it (unintelligible). It will not be, it will not be well, uh, it will not be one of these- types of reasons (unintelligible) one that reason with (unintelligible) well--

HALDEMAN: That's all right.

PRESIDENT: But they've got to (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)