

Chiron

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 21, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL HAIG
FROM: DAVE GERGEN 
SUBJECT: Watergate "White Papers"

Efforts to produce the factual summaries promised by the President are off to a slow, frustrating start. As of now, there is no clear understanding of what is to be done, who's responsible for doing it, and how soon it's to be done. Everyone needs further guidance.

My staff is making real headway on only the dairy price case. Previous communications from your office led us to believe that we had responsibility for papers on the gift of the Vice Presidential papers and the Tricia capital gains question, but now we are informed by the lawyers that they are producing a paper of their own on personal finances and that we should defer action. The lawyers have also advised us that the ITT case is too complicated for the fact sheet approach.

We are prepared to move into other areas which could be more productive, but before we do, I would urge that some basic decisions be made about the future of this project.

Here are my recommendations:

1. Decide topics to be covered: I have reviewed commitments made by the President last week to the press, the Governors, and the Congressmen (not the Senators). Attached please find a list of the papers promised, as well as pertinent quotes from his discussions. This list may be misleading, because there are a number of topics not included (e. g., Tricia's capital gains), and it is clear from the general tenor of RN's comments that he intended to give full, factual summaries on every major issue -- even those he may not have mentioned specifically.

2. Assign responsibility for preparation of papers: The lawyers would obviously prefer to do this entire project themselves. So long as they can do it quickly, I have no quarrel, but time is already short. I recommend that (1) the lawyers designate the issues they can cover quickly themselves; (2) you assign the rest to the writing staff (including Price and Buchanan perhaps); (3) for each topic assigned to the writers, the lawyers designate a member of their group who will be responsible for helping us. This last point is critical; we must have a contact who is responsive. Of course, after every paper is prepared, it would have to be well staffed before distribution.
3. Order maximum cooperation within the staff: If the lawyers have responsibility for a project, we will be happy to supply whatever assistance they might need on an immediate basis. But we need the same in return.
4. Set reasonable deadlines.
5. Consider establishment of special WG task force: You may wish to consider the possibility of setting up a special communications group within the WH that would be responsible for preparing these papers, keeping up to date on future press developments on each topic, and preparing future responses, speech material, etc. So far, most things have been ad hoc and we've had to scramble on every new case.

There would be several ways that the group could be set up. Ron could do it within his staff, possibly under Clawson. I would be willing to do it temporarily over here, breaking off members of my writing and research units under my direction and letting Lee Huebner run the shop for a while. Either Buchanan or Price might want to take it. The really critical question is not who does it, but whether it should be done. I would favor it.

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I apologize for bothering you on a project the lawyers may already have in hand, but my sense of things tells me that this is not the case and that we could easily botch this unless we get it organized.

cc: John Bennett
Bruce Kehrli
Ron Ziegler

RN's COMMITMENTS TO ADDITIONAL FACT SHEETS

	<u>FORUM WHERE COMMITTED</u>		
	<u>Editors</u>	<u>Congress</u>	<u>Governors</u>
Plumbers		X	
Wiretapping		X	
ITT	X	X	X
Vesco		X	
Million Dollar Stock Pool		X	
San Clemente property		X	
Personal finances	X	X	X
Legislative proposals on campaign financing		X	
Milk fund	X		X
Teamsters			X
Gift of VP Papers			X
Don Nixon	X*		

*Commitment vague

The President also told the editors to write to him if they need additional information "and I will give it to you. "

COMMITMENTS TO EDITORS

November 17, 1973

"Well, I should point out I wasn't a pauper when I became President. I wasn't very rich as Presidents go. But you see, in the eight years that I was out of office -- first, just to put it all out and I will give you a paper on this, we will send it around to you, and these figures I would like you to have, not today, but I will have it in a few days --"

* * *

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I should tell all of the editors -- and I don't want to leave any implication that you have not tried to publish as much as you could -- you have just so much room in your newspapers, but I do want you to know that -- well, since you haven't raised some of these subjects, I will raise them myself -- ITT; how did we raise the price of milk -- I wish someone would ask me that one; and who else wanted it raised?"

"What about the situation with regard to the \$1 million secret stock portfolio that you have; a few of those things. I think all of those things need to be answered, and answered effectively, and I think the best way to answer them is twofold:

"One, obviously through the medium of a televised conference like this; but two, through sending to the editors of the Nation's newspapers, all 10,000 of them, the facts. I trust that you will use them. If you don't believe them, I don't mean -- what I mean, I am not suggesting that you wouldn't believe them, but if you feel you need more information, write to me and I will give it to you. I want the facts out, because the facts will prove that the President is telling the truth."

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITMENTS

November 16, 1973

"I intend to do everything I possibly can to clear the air, to lay it out, Watergate, Special Prosecutor, the matters they are interested in, the Ervin Committee to the extent that we can finally get their cooperation there, but most of all the important thing is to get the message to the people. "

"You are going to get chapter and verse with regard to this legislative proposal I have urged the Congress to act upon in regard to campaign financing, chapter and verse on this Vesco thing, which I have not had a damn thing to do with, chapter and verse on the President's financing. "

November 15, 1973

"... what about this business of a million dollar stock pool, and what about all of this property in San Clemente, and how did you get it? Let me take a minute on that, so that you will know what your paper will have. "

"... that (the plumbers and wiretapping) is one of the things we are going to cover. I am preparing each one of these on the plumbers and the ITT, and Vesco.