



TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40
P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

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PRESIDENT AND H. R. HALDEMAN
ON APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40
P.M., To 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Hi. Come on in.

HALDEMAN: Well, that is hard work. Good God! It's amazing it works awfully well

PRESIDENT: Good.

HALDEMAN: ...in picking up the, uh, guest, It doesn't pick up you well. It must be set on the side of the desk or something.

PRESIDENT: Could you get them both?

HALDEMAN: Yes, on either side of your desk.

PRESIDENT: Very good.

HALDEMAN: And, uh, it's hard as hell to hear you, so you gotta keep looking back and re-working.

PRESIDENT: It's pretty frustrating, but, uh-It's, it's in there. There is the meeting where-this is the meeting in the morning of March twenty-first(tape noise)had Ehrlichman for an hour at first. Then you had Steve in and talked about the plan for going to Key Biscayne the next night after your meeting with Shultz...

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: um hmm.

HALDEMAN: ...in the late afternoon, down to Key Biscayne for your long weekend, Thursday night. (Unintelligible with tape noise) Gray and the problems there and the strategy of the FBI and stuff like that a bit. And then Dean said, "The reason for this meeting this morning is that you don't really know what I know, so it's difficult for you to make judgments And, uh, he said, "Overall there's-no doubt about the seriousness of all this. There's a cancer close to the Presidency. It's growing daily; it's compounding itself We're being blackmailed. People are going to start perjuring to protect others and there's no assurance it isn't all gonna bust. And, let's face it. First, let me fill you in on the Watergate." Then he went back to the beginning, went through the whole thing on how it came about.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: It doesn't matter. Put the pieces together (unintelligible) the information (unintelligible with tape noise) aware of any of it, until, uh, afterwards. You don't know how much knowledge Mitchell had.

PRESIDENT: I asked him how much knowledge (unintelligible).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible with tape noise) himself. That, uh,-- "I honestly believe no one over here knew." And you asked about Bob He said, "I don't believe Bob knew specifically. I think Strachan did know. Bob knew there was a capacity. " He says (unintelligible with tape noise) seventeenth lie says, "I was under instructions, under their instructions not to investigate. We worked on the theory of containment. We knew everything the FBI did and everything the Grand Jury did and I have-Petersen's soldier, he kept me informed of leads (unintelligible) in this Administration. He made sure the investigation was narrowed and there was nothing improper about it, and they ran out each lead to the fullest extent and they kept" (unintelligible) But you said, "Why didn't they call Haldeman?" Dean said, "There was no reason for calling'-, him," he, said. He said, "Strachan appeared, as a result of coaching, to be the dumbest guy on the Committee." That's Gordon Strachan. (Tape noise) --"the demands for attorneys' fees. You',re asking us to take this, uh, through the election, so, uh, you gotta have money to take care of other kinds and all that. So arrangements were made through Mitchell and I was present. I, Dean, was present. They had to be taken care of and their needs done and all that (unintelligible) operates cash. Some of it went to Hunt's lawyer. His wife was taking money to a Cuban when her plane was shot down."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: --says (tape noise)"It's the first time I ever heard that."

PRESIDENT: 'Right.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) "is involved and Ehrlichman is, I am, and Mitchell is, That's obstruction of justice. And you said, "How is Haldeman involved?" He said, "We ran out of money and borrowed that three fifty in the safe for polling and so they came here and I went to Haldeman and Haldeman said, "What's it for?" And I told him, and uh, we-as you know we had decided that there is no price too high to pay and blow it before the election. Now see, I told him none of that money was taken out until after the election. So that's a...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...a point we gotta find out. Uh, he says "Now there'll be continual blackmail by Hunt, Liddy and McCord, Colson had talked indirectly to Hunt about commutation (unintelligible with tape noise). Hunt called his lawyer, O'Brien at CREEP Friday. The lawyer came to me. Hunt was demanding seventy-two thousand for personal money and fifty thousand for attorneys' fees and he said he had to have it by the close of business yesterday;

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: that he was trying to get his
(CONTINUED) affairs in order because he's gonna be
sentenced on Friday. This was on Wednesday.
I told O'Brien he came to the wrong man. I'm
not... I'm not involved with money. I don't
know a thing about it and I can't help you."
And he said, -"O'Brien is a great ball
player. He's completely safe and no problem.
Hunt made a direct threat against Ehrlichman
for blackmail. He said, "I'll bring
Ehrlichman to his knees and put him in jail
on Ellsberg and other things. "He said, "I
don't know the extent of the, the other. It
depends on what are the soft points the
Cuban (unintelligible) that, that Hunt..."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: "These were the same people that Hunt and
Liddy used in the California break-in. So,
so, they knew about--Hunt and Liddy are
(unintelligible) around the White
House."And you asked, "Why it was done." He
said, "I don't know," He said, "There are a
couple of things here I've gotten into. At
one time there was a second-story job on
Brookings," which I didn't know about. "And
I was told Ehrlichman had instructed and I
checked with him and he said he didn't know
anything about it and to turn it off. And I
did (unintelligible). He knows, uh," he
said, "who knows about all this.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: The Cubans' lawyer, Rothblatt, who's
(CONTINUED) a no-good son-of-a-bitch. F. Lee Bailey who
came in to cool Rothblatt down.
(Unintelligible) Bittman, O'Brien, and
Parkinson. They're solid but they know. Then
all of the principals and some of the wives
(unintelligible tape noise). You
said, "-Someone did raise the question of me
and Hunt's commutation." And I just said,
"You-you got terribly upset about that
(unintelligible) but obviously it's a
serious problem, to the extent of"-Dean
said, "That's the extent of my knowledge."
He said that, 'In soft spots there's one
continuing blackmail. Not just now when
they're in prison, but, ah, not just now but
when they get to prison, they're gonna keep
on with this and they compound the
obstruction of justice problem and it'll
cost money. You know, people here aren't
pros, they don't know how to do this kind of
thing. " You said, "Well, maybe we can't do
it." Dean said, "That's right, plus the,
it's the problem of raising money." He said,
"Mitchell's working on the money. There's no
denying that Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Dean
are involved in the early fund raising. "You
said, "How much money is involved in this. "
Dean said, "Probably a million dollars over
the next few years." And you said, "If we
need the money we can get the money. We can
get it in cash. I know where it could be
gotten but the question is who can handle
it?" Dean said, "That's right." -And, Dean
then said, " Mitchell should be charged with
that. And he ought to get some pros to help
him. He has LaRue getting it now and I told
him, 'That, that's awful.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: He's also talked to Pappas!' You
(CONTINUED) said, "I know," He said Pappas has
apparently agreed to help.

PRESIDENT: I said?

HALDEMAN: You said, "I know." Then you said, "Just
thinking out loud here, would you put it
through the Cuban Committee?" Dean said,
"No." And you said, "Well, it, it would be
in cash. Is the Cuban Committee--some of this
would be in cash-- Is the Cuban Committee
involved in obstruction of justice?..
Wouldn't that give it cover," Dean said,
"Well, we need some for the Cubans and some
for Hunt and then we have Liddy and McCord
doesn't want one and he's not a bought man
right now." Now that, sort of finished the
subject there and he got into the growing
cancer business and you said "What do you
mean?" He said, "Well, McCord would,-- Krogh
perjured himself before the Grand Jury. He's
haunted by it and went into that. Mitchell
and Magruder have potential perjuries and
there's a possibility of any individual
blowing things (unintelligible) Then you
said, "Your major one to control is Hunt
because he knows so much." He said, "Right.
He keeps saying Colson--he thinks Colson
abandoned him because he tried to see him
about money and Colson wouldn't talk to
him--about money" and so on. And you said,
"Looking at the immediate problem, don't you
have to handle Hunt's financial situation?"
And Dean said, "I talked to Mitchell about
that last night."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: And you said, " We've got to keep the cap
(CONTINUED) on the bottle that much, at least."
Dean said, " That's right. " You said,
"Either that or let it all blow right now, "
Then Dean said, " That's the question." Then
you got into the Kalmbach thing. Dean
explained about the one twenty-seven million
Kalmbach had in boxes. Said he'd spent a lot
of it. This is fascinating because I didn't
know any of this. He spent a good deal since
'69. Five hundred thousand for private
polling; four hundred thousand for the South
for another candidate. That wasn't for
Wallace, it was for the guy who ran against
Wallace.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) for the guy who ran against
him in 70. He mentioned Tony who did the
Chappaquiddick study. You said, "I
heard about that." And he said-- and you
said, that, "There's nothing illegal" or
something. Dean said, "No, nothing illegal,
but it was explosive." He said, " I don't
know anything illegal where Kalmbach did it
except that he won't blow the whistle on
people and that therefore he may get himself
into perjury." Now for example, I asked him
about Segretti and where he'd get the cash.
And you said, "How do we handle that?" And
Dean said, " Well, it doesn't bother me,
there's no crime there, it's just
politically embarrassing. Other
vulnerabilities, that runaway Grand Jury in
New York on Mitchell and Stans." Ehrlichman
thinks-

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: he says, " They're gonna try and grab Ehrlichman(unintelligible) and, uh, Ehrlichman may have to appear at that Grand Jury." You said, "Would he have privilege?" He said, "No, there's no privileged information."

PRESIDENT: I said or he did?

HALDEMAN: You said, "he would have privilege." Dean said, "No." Then he got into the Segretti thing and, and same stuff that you already have-that Haldeman did authorize it and the potential felony charge for Chapin. The real problem is that-I'm not too concerned about that, it's the problem on the PR side, but that's all. He said, "Well, the real problem is the growing situation of support for the Watergate people and the need for some people to perjure themselves. If this ever blows and we're in a cover-up situation, it'll be extremely damaging to you. For example, if it starts breaking and they find a criminal case against Haldeman, uh, Dean, Mitchell, or Ehrlichman. "You said, "Coming down to that fact we cannot take the heat. We have to share it-we have to shave it a little." I think that's what it boils down to. (Unintelligible).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: "Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Mitchell and I
(CONTINUED) should sit down and spend a day or however
long to figure it out. And, uh, try to
figure how to carve this away from you so
that it doesn't, uh, (,tape noise) you or
the Presidency, damage you or the
Presidency, and, uh, (unintelligible) I just
don't know about this but it's obvious, I
know from our conversations that, uh, these
are things that you had no knowledge of."
And, uh, you said, "The triggerman was
Colson on this" and Dean said, 'Well, he
was just in a chain of command. And, and uh,
the problem is, will this break some day
with a domino situation? For instance,
Haldeman will be accused of things that he
never heard of, and the President will be
hurt from those." Dean said, "I am not
confident we can ride through. this. There
are Soft spots-everybody looking out for
himself and getting counsel, worried or
hoping for a long time but (unintelligible)
by the Gray thing getting me on the front
pages."

PRESIDENT: Mmm.

HALDEMAN: "Suppose you and Haldeman and Ehrlichman and
Mitchell put out a full disclosure. " Dean
said, "Well, that's one way. " And, uh, then
you said-then he said, " And we can have the
President tell the Attorney General he wants
another Grand Jury. And, uh, put that out to
avoid criminal liability for many people and
a minimum for the rest by thinking through
the immunity question. " And, you said you
might tell Magruder something. He said,
"Yeah, but some of them will have to go to
jail."

,APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: You said, " Who? Let's talk about that."

(CONTINUED) Dean said, " I think I would, for one."

You said, "Oh, no, no!" Dean said,, "Yeah."
I can see people starting to point the
finger on the obstruction of justice." You
said, "You were just doing it as counsel. We
can cut it off at the Pass." Dean said,
think that proper coordination with the
Department of Justice, maybe we could.
Petersen is the only one I know that's
bright enough to advise us, to put together-
put this together with maximum separation
for the President and minumum damage to the
individuals. I have faith in him. Ah, I have
just been the conduit of information, taking
care of people who are guilty of crimes and
that's, what they're getting on obstruction
of justice, that's how they're getting-I was
a conduit taking care of people who were
guilty of crimes." (Unintelligible). Then
you said, "Suppose you got the money and had
a way to handle it. It would seem to me that
would be worthwhile but we'd still have the
problem of Hunt's clemency." Dean said,
"Right. And the others-It may be untenable.
I'm not sure you can deliver on clemency."
And you said, "Not before the '74 election
for sure." He said, "It may involve-it may
further involve you in this," and you said,
"Yes, and it's wrong."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: Dean said, "There have been some bad judgements made and some necessary judgements made before the election, but we can't burden the second administration with something that won't go away." It has to be (unintelligible) you said, "Who else (unintelligible) would have criminal problems?" Dean said, "Ehrlichman. On a conspiracy to bug Ellsberg--to burglarize Ellsberg's doctor." He said, "Ya know, there's a picture in the files."

PRESIDENT: I didn't know about that. All right. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: "It's embarassing-that's gonna come out some time and, uh, then, there's the question why there was a phone in the White House in the secretary's name and, uh, I have a plan but, uh, you should, uh, think in terms of how to cut the losses and not futher compound them." And then you said that, "Al the moment don't you agree we better take care of the Hunt thing?"

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, I-

HALDEMAN: "Ehrlichman and Haldeman have met with me, But they've never met with Mitchell", and he said, "Haldeman has a potential criminal liability (unintelligible). Uh, he's, may be indicted but might not be convicted." The President said, "If they're gonna be indicted, it's better to tough it throughcut our losses so if it blows, we'll never recover."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: So we'll have to cut it out with no one
(CONTINUED) testifying. You got to realize the
weakness on the blackmail. "Dean said, "What
we need to do is get you up and out and away
from it. Or else hunker down and fight it at
every turn and hope we can do it
(unintelligible)." You said, "Still consider
this point of briefing the Cabinet, the
leaders and so on on my investigation." Dean
said, "If we go there, we'll have to give
(unintelligible).. " You said, "The most
difficult problems are the guys going to
jail and clemency. How long will they sit
tight?" You said, "Have a meeting fast,
today." He said, "We can't. Mitchell's not
here." You said, " Tomorrow." Dean said, "
Hunt,-- Haldeman and Ehrlichman don't want
to talk to Mitchell. Haldeman agrees that
you, you should have the facts and wanted me
to talk to you." Somewhere at that point, I
think, I can't tell on the tape, but it's
obvious because I talked with him
(unintelligible)? We can charge them with
blackmailing us. He said, "I talked to
Ehrlichman, he's gotta get away from this.
But he recommends a meeting at the earliest
time." Then you pushed for a meeting with
Haldeman and Mitchell. You said, " I don't.
"You said, "I don't want to go over there.
You decide and let me know. You tell them
exactly what you told me about the
obstruction and then see what the line is,
whether we stonewall it or whether we take
the heat. If it's stonewall and take the
heat, or we can analyze the vulnerable
points, especially Hunt.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: The question of whether Hunt'll blow the
(CONTINUED) whistle." And you said to me, "The
point is all the secretaries and so on,"
--you started explaining to me, other words,
(unintelligible) problem. Then, uh, (tape
noise) me for the first time about the
Colson-Magruder phone call. I was kind of
surprised about that. You said, "The Hunt
problem is serious because of Ellsberg."
Dean said, Well, we can put that on a
National Security basis. But then they'll
say why didn't the CIA or FBI do it, ll and I
said, "Because we were checking them." And,
uh, Dean said, "Well, we could probably get
by on that that solves the Krogh, Krogh
pro-problem, that, that there was treason
involved here. That's what they're
investigating." You said, "We must have a
talk with Mitchell. The cut off point is
that a possibility it still, could be Liddy
because that's where we are now and that's
all we know at this point. But that
requires-if, if Magruder is lying--it would
require continued perjury by Magruder." And
Dean then said to me, this is the first I
was there," Hunt's playing hard ball with
us. I said, "what, what, what about? Money?"
Dean said, "Yeah." You said, Yeah. A hundred
and twenty thousand dollars." You said,
"That's easy to get but it's not easy to
deliver. And trying to cut our losses won't
work. We have to look at what they are and
avoid criminal liability."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: I said that?

HALDEMAN. Uh, huh. And you said, "Well, there's another way, but it would require a million dollars to take care of the defendants. But then they'll crack after we're gone, anyway. You can't deliver on clemency and Colson's promises. Hunt's talking about being out by Christmas." Then he reported the thing about Kleindienst takes control of the Parole Board now he says, "We can deliver on parole." Whether we'll still be able to-special parole. Dean said, "Our greatest jeopardy is paying the blackmail." You said, we can get the dollars. There's no problem with that, but we can't provide the clemency. "And I said," I don't see any way the White House or anyone in the White House can be involved in trying to get Hunt the money." And Dean said, "Well, we're already deeply involved in that, that's the problem." And, uh, then he got into that when they ran out of the Kalmbach money they got the three fifty and I said, "That was simply moved where it belonged." And Dean said, "Every time we ask for, ya know, we've had to get Strachan to go to the safe and take it to LaRue, which would have been a forever operation." And, uh, and you said, "Back to the money. The ways to get it. (Pause). The hell with the million (tape noise) it's all off," But I mean you made (unintelligible).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: "So let it go. Then blow the whistle
(CONTINUED) and, uh, (unintelligible) is that
your recommendation?" Dean said, No, not
necessarily. It's better to get our story
before the Grand Jury and let them
investigate the White House. But I haven't
thought that through." That's where I quit
because I, I figured I had enough and better
get over here. Uh, because.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...Apparently, some more on there is, there
is, uh, I would say that confirms your
recollection pretty much the way you said
it-the way you recalled it. And then, I
don't really see a need(unintelligible) .

PRESIDENT: Really?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Well, I say though that, well
(unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...we can get the money.

PRESIDENT: ...we can get the money.

HALDEMAN: Okay. But you didn't do it and we're drawing
him out on the question of what, what's in
the box.

PRESIDENT: Money, what could we do with it? You get the
money, how do ya deliver it? Yeah.

HALDEMAN: That's...

PRESIDENT: ...that really (unintelligible).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: Okay. You're drawing Dean out on what he's talking about here.

PRESIDENT: You have to know exactly what he has.

HALDEMAN: And the conclusion, in fact, was, don't do it. You can't do it.

PRESIDENT: It's not a good story, best we can

HALDEMAN: He raises a lot of, a lot of new stuff. That's it.

PRESIDENT: Well. The new stuff

HALDEMAN: It's interesting. He's told you a different story than. he's told to me.

PRESIDENT: Well, (unintelligible). I said, well, that's-- we gotta keep the cap on it. We can get the money, huh? But I said

HALDEMAN: Ya see, you're trying it out.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: You're trying to see how far it goes. You said, "Is that your recommendation?" That's, you do that all the time. You ask people questions on the basis of--, to try and see what direction they're going. That's...they're leading questions. But it doesn't mean that your statement is (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I said a million dollars. With a million dollars (unintelligible) clemency. You couldn't do it till after the '74 elections. That's an incriminating thing. His, his word against the President's.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) tape recorder
(CONTINUED) in his pocket.

HALDEMAN: At this point, you're, you're investigating
(pause)(10 second unintelligible.)

HALDEMAN: Twenty-first?

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: It all started on the seventeenth.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh yeah, he must've been talking from notes.
I mean it sure looked like it-I mean sounded
like it.

PRESIDENT: It, it made quite an orderly report he'd put
together.

HALDEMAN: Uh, he told you that the bugging information
did come to Strachan and to Haldeman,
there's no doubt about it.

PRESIDENT: Not the whole thing (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You just want the Hunt part of it?

PRESIDENT: Yep.

HALDEMAN: Okay. "(Unintelligible). O'Brien came to
me.' Hunt is demanding seventy-two thousand
for personal needs and fifty for attorney
fees by the close of business yesterday and
wants to get his affairs in order cause he's
gonna be sentenced on Friday.' I said to
O'Brien,' You came to the wrong man. I'm not
involved in money and I don't now a thing
about it and I can't help you." Dean states
O'Brien's a great ball player
(unintelligible).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: He made a direct threat against hrlichman. Hunt said, "I'll bring hrlichman to his knees, put him in jail." Ellsberg and other events, seamy things (unintelligible) they did (unintelligible) extent they were involved in, soft spots. He said, "The first one is a continuing blackmail

PRESIDENT: All right.

HALDEMAN: "Not just now but when they're in prison and so on. So they compound the obstruction of justice problem and it'll, it'll cost a lot of money. The people here aren't pros, they don't know how to do this sort of thing." You said, "Maybe we can't." (Unintelligible) closer to the problem of raising money (unintelligible) was working on the money. (Unintelligible) and I have (unintelligible) fund raising." You said, "How much money is involved?" He said, "a million dollars over the next few years." You said, "You might, we could get the money. We can get it in cash ' I know where it could be gotten but the question is who can handle it?" He said, "That's right." (tape noise) He said, "Mitchell should be charged with that responsibility and get some pros to help him. He has LaRue out getting it. I told him that's awful. He's also talked to Pappas." You said, "I know." He said, "Pappas has agreed to help." "Just thinking out loud here, would you put it through the Cuban Committee?" He said, "No." (Unintelligible with tape noise) cash, is the Cuban Committee, obstruction of justice

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: would that give it a cover." He
(CONTINUED) said, "We need some for the Cubans and some
for Hunt." We can't say (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: Krogh's problems-on that thing you said,
"Your major one to control is Hunt, because
he knows so much." He said, "Right. He kept
saying Colson cause he thinks Colson
abandoned him (unintelligible.) "Don't you
have to handle Hunt's financial situation?"
Dean said," I talked to Mitchell about that
last night. "You said, "You got to keep the
cap on the bottle that much cause it's"-Dean
said, "That's right." You said, "Either that
or let it all blow right now." Dean said,
"That's the question."

PRESIDENT: That's not a bad line for me at that point,
is it? Political or is it gonna come down.

HALDEMAN: I don't think so. You're smoking him out on
what he thinks the alternatives are

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: You're pumping him.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: As you did on other things here, -in these various things you would say to well, you know, "What would you do about this and what, where would you go on that?" Then they got to the attempt (unintelligible), "Suppose you got the money and the way to handle, things. It would seem to me that would be worthwhile." You said, " We'd have a problem with Hunt's clemency" (Unintelligible) and the others maybe (unintelligible) and the others that may be untenable. I'm not sure you can deliver on clemency.". You said, "Not before the '74 election for sure." Dean said, "It may further involve you." You said, " Yes, and it would be,--then it's wrong. "

PRESIDENT: That's not bad.

HALDEMAN: Dean said "There've been some bad judgements made and some necessary judgements made before the election, but you can't burden the second administration with something that won't go away. There has to be--" And you said, "'Well, who else is a potential criminal?" Dean said, 'You know I don't have a plan but we should think in terms of how to cut the losses and not further compound them." You said, "At the moment, don't you agree we better take of the Hunt thing. (unintelligible)?"

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible with tape noise) it was just sort of lobbed in...(Tape noise).

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: to the point of setting up a
(CONTINUED) meeting with Ehrlichman (unintelligible)
with Mitchell. (Tape noise). I think you
wanted to analyze the vulnerable points such
as Hunt, the problem of whether Hunt would
blow the whistle. Dean told me about the
fact that Hunt had been a problem because of
this-

PRESIDENT: National Security,

HALDEMAN: Well, uh, you say, you say the Hunt problem
is serious because of Ellsberg. And the
effect on our National Security.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible Tape Noise) hard ball with
us" and I said," What? What about, money?"
and you said," Yes, 120,000, which is easy
to get, but it's not easy to deliver. We
have to try to cut our losses but it won't
work, so we have to look at what they are to
avoid criminal liability."(Tape Noise). I, I
oughta go back and get your verbatim points.
These are--my desk--It's hard as hell to get
you on this thing.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible with tape noise)"would
require a million dollars to take care of
the defendants but they'll crack after we're
gone."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: I said that?

HALDEMAN: Um hmm. And then there was some discussion about, you know, yeah, but, but then Dean said that was, that would be history but it wouldn't affect us directly or something. And, uh, (tape noise) he said something about we can't deliver on clemency. Colson's been dropping promises. Dean said, "Yeah, Hunt's talking about being out by Christmas." (Unintelligible) Then they got into a parole discussion.

PRESIDENT: Kleindienst to give parole, right?

HALDEMAN: And then, uh, he came back with, "Our greatest jeopardy is, is uh, the thing is blackmail." You said, "We can; you get the dollars. We can get the money. There's no problem with that. But we can't deliver on clemency." I said, "I don't see any way the White House or anyone in the White House can (unintelligible). "He said, (unintelligible). I think there's probably more. I think we went back over it again. We got more into the thing of, "But we can't do it, that it isn't right, (unintelligible)." I recall more discussion when I was there of the thing of it being--that we can't get into this kind of a position. (Unintelligible) a position, and besides that it was National Security. It seems to me that there was more discussion and (unintelligible) but it isn't-

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:50 P.M.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: If it is, it isn't (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: The are many questions based on that. He can say that the President discussed we gotta keep the cap on the bottle, we gotta take care of Hunt.

HALDEMAN: Well, I'd say, it was because

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) how do we (unintelligible)-- money? Clemency not before '74? That's the vulnerable point.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) your position

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible with tape noise) the fact that it never happened.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible with tape noise) drawing him out, that you made notes, steps on this. That you were also concerned, you were trying to winnow' that one out because there was, there were factors in it that Dean didn't know anything about as this conversation indicates, about the National Security. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That's--you may be pushing him there to find out whether he has set up a system of delivery and all that, which he didn't.

PRESIDENT: What I'm really setting up there, putting the best light on a, on a bad situation, is basic, basically, I'm saying, " Well, get the money, but uh, we should try to cut it off and so forth-- but how do you do it?"

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: You're being blackmailed, here on this specific question of, of the National Security point. Because what Hunt was holding ya up on, was not on the Watergate.

PRESIDENT: Still, still-

HALDEMAN: But, but on the, other, sea-my work for Ehrlichman. All the other defendants were also involved in this.

PRESIDENT; Is time (unintelligible) big pressure?

HALDEMAN: Yeah. I don't think I think he's spinning out what, what he thinks Dean is looking at as his hole card.

PRESIDENT: Kleindienst came over today (noise) and, uh, this memorandum he gave me (Unintelligible) And I authorized him to uh, pass that ahead pass it to the judge uh, cause (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: That was Wednesday. You met with him- that was Wednesday morning. You met with him again early afternoon in here with Mitchell, and Ehrlichman...

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: I know that.

HALDEMAN: ...and then later in the afternoon with Ehrlichman.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Then I think you met with him Thursday, the next day, before then you went to Key Biscayne Thursday night. I'll have to check the log. I'm not sure if Dean went with him Thursday or not, but as I recall, I think he did.

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) back here who had the conversation with Mitchell on the money.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, it really isn't a conversation with Mitchell on the money.

PRESIDENT: Well.

HALDEMAN: There was a conversation between Mitchell and Dean that we assumed was on, on the money, and, and we assumed (unintelligible) because we didn't say it there was something we didn't want to get into. (Unintelligible) said, "Listen, I guess it's taken care of. There's no problem there. I guess, it's worked out, I guess it's okay, something to that effect. And, uh, the big question was, "Did you pay him the money, or didn't you pay him, or are you going to, or is some one else paying him, or did -you tell him to go to hell or what?"

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: The matter was my trying to get the facts, the truth, and that's the (unintelligible). Call in John, telling me for the first time (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You're, you're probing.

PRESIDENT: Right here. I'm interested in a cost, right?

HALDEMAN: You (unintelligible), you never said this is, you, you asked leading questions. You nev--, you said, well, we can get the money, that's no problem. You just see, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, but I said we oughta, uh, at least we ought to take care of that, didn't I say that though?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but that was to lead him on into the question of how to handle the money. And he didn't buy. He said, " I don't know. You ought to get busy on-- if you gonna do that Mitchell ought to take care of it." Which is kind of interesting. You were trying to smoke out whether Dean knew how to handle money. And was involved in this payoff stuff and it was clear he wasn't. He didn't know how to handle it, didn't give you any answer to the question, said, " You ought to-that Mitchell ought to do that, get some pros to handle it."

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: Now, I think I'll find later in
(CONTINUED) this thing, because I think I recall when I
was there, a discussion of that where Dean
was saying, " No, our people don't know how
to wash money, get it all worked out," and
all that, and, uh, I think that will come up
again, where you push him.

PRESIDENT: I may have said later (unintelligible) do
what you can on it.

HALDEMAN: Well, you may be, may be dead-- I, I don't
think you did.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: You were there (unintelligible) that day (unintelligible). You were there the rest of that day.

HALDEMAN: (Tape noise) that morning.

PRESIDENT: My recollection's fairly clear on that (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Let me tell you one--maybe bothersome thing in that, I checked this (unintelligible) the tape works the, in here (tape noise). In the log, when the four of us met in here, with you, Dean and Mitchell were in for five minutes longer than Ehrlichman and I were.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. That was when we discussed (unintelligible). I, uh, discussed money with Mitchell, never.

HALDEMAN: Okay.

PRESIDENT: Don't worry about that log? The only other time.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...because at that point, Dean would have felt, I'm sure, that the problem no longer existed because of the conversation he had with Mitchell. You may find on the a meeting in the evening, late in the day, with Ehrlichman, Dean, and me in here, that something was said about--with that being as much on your mind as it was in the morning I, I can't imagine that you didn't do something to follow up on it. Because you wouldn't, you, you wouldn't just let something like that drop. You'd had to have satisfied yourself in some way that something was happening on that.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: It probably is, if you didn't raise it with Mitchell and Dean, you probably raised it with Ehrlichman, Dean and me and one of us probably said that Mitchell said something this morning about it, and

PRESIDENT: Yes, I

HALDEMAN: ...I think that's no problem or something like that.

PRESIDENT: So that's that.

HALDEMAN: That's it.

PRESIDENT: ...You think he'll say that--that we were aware of it? (unintelligible-tape noise)

HALDEMAN: At that point, you're trying to bust the case. You're not worrying about individual acts, at that point in time. You're trying to open up what the hell's going on here. And you don't know whether to believe this guy at this point. You're starting to wonder.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Some of some of these stories

PRESIDENT: Like

HALDEMAN: ...some of these stories don't check. He tells you Krogh's worried about perjury, Ehrlichman tells you Krogh flatly says he didn't perjure himself and has no concern about it at all.

PRESIDENT: That's quite, quite true at this point too that, uh, we discussed the, the money situation, raising the money (unintelligible). I said, "That's wrong," didn't I? Oh, wrong on clemency.

HALDEMAN: No, you said getting the money was wrong.

PRESIDENT: Hmm?

HALDEMAN: You said that, that approach would be wrong...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...trying to get the money. No, because I don't think you felt that clemency was wrong. I think you felt that you had some justification for clemency on Hunt.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: Because of his family, and he then, actually you'd talked about it for all of them because, because the people, they really are being screwed.

PRESIDENT: Right

HALDEMAN: ...on an equity basis.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) you can't-move in on immediate clemency. You probably may not be able to do it. But in clemency there can be compassion, not, not concern with with cover-up.

PRESIDENT: Also say, we can say we talked about,- said (unintelligible) it just won't work. (Unintelligible-with tape noise). We didn't furnish any money, thank God.

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Remember I told you later that I could get a 100,000?

HALDEMAN: That makes--that rings a bell "cause you talked about Rose having some money or-something. I remember that.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible with tape noise).

HALDEMAN: You didn't know what kind of a--he had told you that Mitchell had been working up this program with of, uh, financial support for those people. You didn't know what that was. At that point you didn't know whether

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: Mitchell was involved. He flatly says
(CONTINUED) here--in this report to you, he isn't
convinced that Mitchell was involved yet.or
at least doesn't say so.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Hunt is blackmailing me and
Ehrlichman (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) that said, "screw him."

PRESIDENT: He went to see Ehrlichman after this.

HALDEMAN: Before (tape noise) the threat came in the
Friday preceding, this was a Wednesday, and
uh, the due date was the night preceding,
the Tuesday night preceding I imagine the
talk (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Show Ehrlichman that memorandum from
Kleindienst, and say we had no choice under
the circumstances.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible),

PRESIDENT: Oh, Mitchell, I mean (unintelligible) or the
prosecutor in this--has had nothing from this break-in was
made available. The prosector (unintelligible). Dean, see,
informed them of the Ellsberg break-in.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Petersen.

PRESIDENT: Right

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) prosecution. It'll break in
the paper, it'll say that'll clear Ellsberg,
Watergate buggers, tried to do this or that
and the other thing. Know what I mean? This
is the only proper thing to do; John he
disagrees. And I--Kleindienst asked me. I
said, there's no choice there.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M. TO 5:30 P.M.

(Unintelligible with tape noise),

PRESIDENT: How about immunity for Dean.

HALDEMAN: I don't think he can do it. (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: He's going to come in to see him. According to Kleindienst, he's gonna see, uh. (tape noise).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) no sir.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) I'm not trying, you can't deal with the guy, I don't think, if he's if worse. I think he's playing this game. He may not be.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

HALDEMAN: If he's not playing this game, then

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible with tape noise).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible with tape noise).

PRESIDENT: Yeah, with John, not you. (Unintelligible with tape noise) blackmail (unintelligible) it's a possibility. I would say it's wrong.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible),

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) you get the money. You do all that. Where does it lead you?
(Unintelligible). Petersen's honorable.

HALDEMAN: If he's honorable...

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Petersen? Petersen's (unintelligible)~

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Agnew for Vice President. Even your worst enemies don't want to do that.

PRESIDENT: Well, yeah. (Unintelligible with tape noise).

HALDEMAN: John is only raising that as a, as an outside possibility, that's something he just spun out last night, I hadn't heard his story on that.

PRESIDENT: Well, gotta look at it as a possibility. What Dean's up to.

HALDEMAN: It's not been something (unintelligible). I think, he's just looking at the, at the worst

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...that could come out of that end, and I think it was, was, uh, in the process, also trying to bring home the point that we...

PRESIDENT: that the sacking of Ehrlichman, Haldeman ain't gonna do the trick.

HALDEMAN: Well that's right.

PRESIDENT: That's really true.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, not from a point of self-defense.

PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

HALDEMAN: We're prepared to do it, to go out on the sword if it's the right thing to do. But lacking the conviction that it's the right thing to do we're, we're, I'm sure you're gonna argue the I'm sure the point to consider, the other way

PRESIDENT: Let's not drag up, (unintelligible) the wagons up around the White House. Let me say it's got to be you, Ehrlichman, and I have got to put the wagons up around the President on this particular conversation. I just wonder if the son-of-a-bitch had a recorder on him. (Tape noise). I didn't notice any but I wasn't looking (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: It's almost inconceivable that the guy would try that because

PRESIDENT: He was really coming in, in fact, to warn me.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. He wasn't coming in, wasn't coming in for the purpose of

PRESIDENT: At that point, he hadn't made the command decision to, uh.

HALDEMAN: He had no thought that you were going to say anything like this. All he was coming in to tell you was that there was a problem. He wasn't expecting you to solve it, uh, uh, to solve it that way. I think you probably surprised him enormously by, by even raising this point. And think that is a...

APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 4:40 P.M., TO 5:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT: What, what?

HALDEMAN: Of, you know, well, we could get the money.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I think that's the last thing he expected you to say.

PRESIDENT: What did he'd expect me to say, we can't do it?

HALDEMAN: What, he expected you to say was well, that's an indication of another part of the problem, isn't it? He was just trying to point, he was logging, and you look at the course of this conversation, he went from that point to other points, he was logging all the problems, we have, the soft spots. And they were things like Krogh, like the 350, and like this and like that, and this was one of them.

TOM HART:

UNIDENTIFIED: Excuse me, Mr. President, Mr. Petersen's across the street. Did you want to see him here or over at the Oval Office?

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) going across, I'm going to take a hard line on clemency.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. I don't think he'll raise the subject.

PRESIDENT: You don't think he will?

HALDEMAN: I don't think he's gonna (unintelligible). I don't (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Oh, I think Dean's, Dean's told him,, or outlined it.

HALDEMAN. Could be, but I doubt it.