

TRANSCRIPT OF A MEETING AMONG THE
PRESIDENT, H.R. HALDEMAN
AND JOHN EHRLICHMAN ON APRIL 25, 1973
FROM 11:06 TO 1:55 P.M.

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EHRLICHMAN: ...and if I can say go back and forth and on and so on, but (unintelligible) in thinking about this', I keep coming back to Dean because there are things that don't add up otherwise...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...in this whole thing.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRLICHMAN: And, I don't know if you feel you can do this, but I think the three of us know one another well enough, that, we've been through enough together, but (unintelligible) (tape noise) necessary that we have your very candid...

PRESIDENT: Assessment?

EHRLICHMAN: ...assessment of the threat to you. Obviously, neither one of us want to do anything to harm you in any way, we want to avoid harming you.

PRESIDENT: The threat (unintelligible) Dean?

EHRLICHMAN: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: All right.

EHRLICHMAN: Now, let me, let me just spin something out for you. As a, as a...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...it has a probably a far out point, as we work back...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...I think it's entirely conceivable that if Dean is totally out of control and if matters are not handled (unintelligible), that you could get a resolution of impeachment...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: ...in the Senate...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: ...I don't know if you've thought of this or not, but I got thinking about it last night. Uh, on the ground that you committed a crime.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Uh, and that there is no other legal process available to, uh, uh, the United States people, other than...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: ...other than impeachment. Otherwise, you have immunity from prosecution.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Uh, so I think we have to, I think we have to think about that. We have to (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: ...and see about, see what the point is, is it a crime, if any, and uh, how serious it is, and would Dean, is a threat, and what we do about it. Uh, my own analysis is that what he has falls far short of any commission of a crime by you. So far as I know.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: I don't know what you may have talked about with him in those ten or twelve hours you and he spent there in the months, months of February and March.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Uh, but, uh, you get down to a point where you've got John Dean prancing in there and saying, "The President said this and the President said that," and having somebody in your behalf come back and say, "No, the President didn't say that, and

EHRLICHMAN: that's ridiculous." Uh, and, and, so you get a kind of credibility thing unless, like he seems to be doing, he's very busy, uh, dredging up corroborating evidence and looking for documentation or taking statements from people based on leads that may have developed from those conversations. And I think really the only way that I know to make a judgement on this is for you to listen to your tapes and see what actually was said then, or maybe for Bob to do it, or, or, somebody. See what was said there. And then analyze how big a threat that is

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: If it didn't come out of those meetings, then I think it's imaginary.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: Because it then does not come out of your mouth, it comes by reason of the actions of, or something that one of us said or did, and it can be handled. But if you're really confronted with that kind of a dilemma, or that kind of crisis in this thing, uh, I think before any other steps are taken, any precipitous steps (unintelligible) on us for that matter, uh, you better damn sure know...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...what your hole card is.

PRESIDENT: I agree.

EHRLICHMAN: Uh, beyond that, uh, hell, I'm, I'm not afraid of Dean, uh, and what he might say about me for instance. Uh, I think it can be handled. Uh, I don't think Bob has anything to fear from Dean, basically, then, particularly based on what the attorneys tell us, uh, he has an almost unlimited capacity to dredge up, uh, anecdotes, uh, from a from a dim and murky past, and we're just gonna have, have to handle it one by one. You mentioned the La Costa plan. Our fellows

EHRlichman: probably didn't tell you this but Dick Moore's attorney called on him, uh, on John Wilson, and indicated that Dick Moore just doesn't have any memory at all about La Costa. He can barely remember even being out there.

PRESIDENT: Dick, Dick Moore told me...

EHRlichman: I understand.

PRESIDENT: ...he said there was something...

EHRlichman: I understand.

PRESIDENT: ...maybe his memory's become dim.

EHRlichman: His memory is, apparently, feeble beyond measure, because his attorney has explained to him what his exposure is...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: ...and Dick is scared shitless, apparently. Uh...

PRESIDENT: To what point?

HALDEMAN: ...To the point where he has contacted Silbert to ascertain that he will not be indicted prior to his daughter's wedding, so that he can go to his daughter's wedding.

EHRlichman: Now, that was his proposal to his attorney to do that.

PRESIDENT: Okay.

HALDEMAN: He wanted his attorney to, to go and find out.

PRESIDENT: Dick think he's going to be indicted for that?

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: But not for, but not for, not for that conversation alone...

EHRlichman: Dick, Dick has been keeping (unintelligible) with Dean, all through this process. And far more than either of us, far more.

PRESIDENT: Well, let me suggest this, Bob, uh, you've got the conversation (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Now, let me say...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...(unintelligible) I think I remember, I would remember everything, except, you see, there's always a possibility that Dean may have discussed this case with (unintelligible). I know the Bittman conversation, you know...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...I know however, that in that conversation, the question was raised of blackmail-- I know, however, that in that conver-, I also raised the question how much is it going to, would it cost...

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: ...a million dollars. And I said facetiously, "Well, I guess we can get a million dollars." It was then that we started my whole investigation. Now, I don't know, how does that one sound to you?

EHRlichman: Well, that sounds tough and...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...uh, yet it's manageable. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Point out that that was triggered.