



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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PRESIDENT AND MESSRS. JOHN EHRLICHMAN AND H.R.
HALDEMAN ON APRIL 25, 1973, FROM 11:06 A.M. TO
1:55 P.M.

EHRLICHMAN: Hi.

PRESIDENT: Well, I understand the weather was as good here
as it was in Florida.

EHRLICHMAN: Beautiful.

PRESIDENT: Great. (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: Just starting Spring up there.

PRESIDENT: Oh, is it. Well, regardless of what the hell
happens during these rather difficult times,
Camp David is always yours. For three years and
eight months, huh.

HALDEMAN: It couldn't be more beautiful than it was this
weekend.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: All your tulips were out on the...

PRESIDENT: They are?

HALDEMAN: ...bank down there by the pool, you know, and kids
had their Easter Egg hunt there and that was
sensational.

PRESIDENT: Right, right, right, right.

HALDEMAN: (Tape noise). It was very nice.

PRESIDENT: Right.

PRESIDENT: Well, why don't we just, ah (unintelligible).
(Tape noise). Apparently you have, you've
talked to Connally about his view...

HALDEMAN: Yes, I have.

PRESIDENT: and he's of the opinion and, uh, (tape noise) the facts.

HALDEMAN: ...he was, as he expressed to me, is not (tape noise) (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: The problem, of course, is to get people to express their views (unintelligible). I don't want to talk to Connally for a reason.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I may, I may have to.

EHRlichman: Well, I talked to...

PRESIDENT: I have a better reason that I frankly wouldn't want to get his, get his (unintelligible) on this God damn thing (unintelligible) the President this may indicate...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...one person not heard of they've taped.

HALDEMAN: Well, I wish that I, I said, "I didn't want to raise it with him unless he wanted to talk about it..."

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I said, "I want to talk with you about it on a personal basis, not..."

PRESIDENT: That's fair enough.

HALDEMAN: "...not any other way."

PRESIDENT: Fair enough.

HALDEMAN: "...and I want to talk with you with the agreement between both of us that we haven't had the conversation, and uh, uh..."

PRESIDENT: You see, I don't, I don't know that I could do that.

HALDEMAN: No, I think that's right and...

PRESIDENT: But I'm glad you did, and that's fine.

HALDEMAN: Well. Let me give you (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: But Rogers I can, I can talk to him and I did. Directly, quite directly. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: A quick run through on what Connally says, as he, as I'm sure Ron's told you. This'll be...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...be by some of what Ron has said. I think that may put it...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: He says: "I think the general situation seems extremely bad, that little by little more and more becomes involved. Everyday there's something new. All the press talks about is this stuff now."

PRESIDENT: There may not be...

HALDEMAN: "It now implicates the President in many minds and it must be brought to some resolution soon." It appears to Connally as a reader of the newspapers, knowing nothing about the facts, that Mitchell is, is, undeniably involved, that Dean is probably equally involved, that Magruder is probably equally involved, and that Haldeman and Ehrlichman had more knowledge than anyone thought they had.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: Ah, he says: "You and John had better take a good look at your whole (unintelligible). Analyze how much you knew, and how much you're involved in the periphery, to the--even if you didn't know."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: He thinks my judgment and others familiar with the case is better than any one else's. The question I've got to face is, am I guilty of knowing about something that if not illegal, was at least unethical. You've got to work on the basic assumption that whatever the facts are, they'll come out. Because everybody now is out to save his own skin. And a lot of people are out to nail other people.

PRESIDENT: I think that's quite true. We got--everybody's in business themselves.

EHRLICHMAN: Sure.

HALDEMAN: Most everybody, yeah.

PRESIDENT: Including Colson.

HALDEMAN: And then he says...

PRESIDENT: Except for you two. (Laughter)

HALDEMAN: Also, well, we've got a Nixon position too...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...uhh, he also says: "You've got to assume that everything that comes out will be cast by the press in the worst possible light."

PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

HALDEMAN: "So, you've got to look at things from two standpoints, the President's and yours." He thinks that, uhh, the President should at least consider, aside from Ehrlichman and Haldeman, uh, looking at the whole thing,

trying to make a new start, ending this somehow and making the point--He, he said: "It's clear that everybody who clearly is involved and knowingly is involved, must get out and get out now, and that specifically, he means, and by that he specifically means Dean." He said: "The, President ought to look for other things to do as follows: like going to Congress and recommending a ten year term for the FBI Director (unintelligible) moving Kleindienst out of the Justice Department, and..."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: "...giving them a new Attorney General..."

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: "...and meanwhile, then, "he said, "if you and John leave, I don't think the President realizes the problem he has in how he handles (unintelligible). (Tape. noise). "Uh, he said: "If it's inevitable that you're going to have to leave at some point in this, you should get out as soon as you can and prove your innocence. And, you should get out on the basis of your loyalty to the President." Uh, he said, "I would not, by any means, discard the idea of taking a leave of absence. I had not originally thought of that as viable, but it might well be." The thing that worries him, he says, "Is the money pay-off to the defense, "which he feels is at least as big as the bugging, right now, maybe bigger.

PRESIDENT: Bigger?

HALDEMAN: Yes. And he said, "What you have to do is consider with your, with the President and with your lawyers, first of all, the wiretap area, secondly the money pay off, and both those you've got to look at first from the question of legal vulnerability and second the question of moral, ethics, publicity and PR vulnerability." He said "That's where it appears to me your vulnerability comes. And that..."

PRESIDENT: The second is the thing that I'm
(unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Right. Right. And he says, "That, in turn
depends upon what people say, whether it's true
or not. It does not depend on the facts."

PRESIDENT: You mean, like, what, uhh Hunt says...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...what, uh, McCord says, what (unintelligible)
Dean says...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...and what, and what LaRue says.

HALDEMAN: That's right. And he said, "There's, there's a
clear danger here. With all these people
rattled that somebody's going to decide to lie
some more. Just as obviously people have
already lied. And to lie to try to do, it's
conceivable, to lie to try to tie you into
something you had no knowledge of. Somebody
could come out, quietly come out and say, 'I
reported to Haldeman every evening on the
wiretaps.'"

PRESIDENT: Well. Now you can't prove it on that. On that
I would say it isn't--I think, what is more
likely to land on the money side, perhaps on the
face of the--that in view of the, the later
things that happened, not at the time you were
there, but at the time in other words, the time
the three, the three twenty-two went over and at
the time that John uh, talked to Kalmbach at
that time, uhh, certainly the humanitarian, uhh,
they were employed at the Committee and so
forth; I think makes a great deal of sense.
The later time, the uhh, so-called La Costa
conversation, and the troublesome conversation
that, uhh, Dean had where he reported that
Bittman had told, uhh, (tape noise).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible). He makes the point, though,
that that position depends on what people say
and whether you have a chance to answer...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...which you may or may not have. He said, "You gotta face the fact the press (unintelligible) to destroy the President. (Unintelligible) One of the first things that will happen if you resign is that everyone will assume that you're more deeply involved than you are."

PRESIDENT: Correct.

HALDEMAN: For that reason, the legal essence becomes in his mind a possibly more viable alternative. He says, "But, if you're ever directly involved by anybody in either the wiretapping or the papers, then your, you've got a problem. Whether it's true or not." Then, he says, "Under the circumstances the President could say, "I'm convinced that Haldeman and Ehrlichman are not directly involved. "He said, "You've got to do a, do a very careful statement with the lawyers. (Unintelligible)."

PRESIDENT: I, I, I have been indeed assured by--Another rather interesting thing from the legal standpoint, John, is that the lawyers, uhh, they are writing me a memorandum to the effect...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...we have studied all this and they are not involved, and I said, "I have this from their lawyers, da da da da." Not bad. It's a, it's a pretty good option. I mean, I think that's something we should consider in any event.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...that...you could say that, and then say, "But notwithstanding their innocence as this is stated, they have asked for, for a leave of absence until this is cleared up. And I've granted it."

PRESIDENT: There must be no...(unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Well...

PRESIDENT: ...as John, you see, indicated to, uhh, in earlier conversation, that he didn't go to sleep (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: He said that to me, too, he said he had not filed a leave of absence (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) flat out. (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: He said that. (Unintelligible). Then he, then he, got back to him, and he said, "The other thing to do, you should not rule this out, is to do nothing, in other words." And he said, "The problem with that, that's the strongest position to take and basically the best position, but it's also the highest risk, because, if you do that, and then somebody successfully lays anything at your door, you will have destroyed the President." That is the problem he feels with that area. Now, he says, "If you know they can't successfully lay anything at your door, then that's clearly .the route to take."

PRESIDENT: Now, on successfully at your door, did he say there that he approached both areas, both legal and, uhh, inference, uhh...

HALDEMAN: Yes.

PRESIDENT: You see what I mean...

HALDEMAN: Yes.

PRESIDENT: ...as far as laying something successfully at your door, that's been done in your case already, and John's maybe in the future.

HALDEMAN: Not really. I mean he does...

PRESIDENT: Well, then I--not legally, but the inference, the inference thing, I, what I, what I...

HALDEMAN: Okay. He says he "has a lingering fear about the stories of the feud between Ehrlichman and Mitchell and that they've sworn vengeance on each other, or something," because he said they...

PRESIDENT: What about that? Is it. I would agree there's some truth in it. Not on your part, but Mitchell's.

EHRlichman: Not on mine, I know...

PRESIDENT: But you remember Mitchell, John, in the Alsop case...it is (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Alsop printed a sort of a "tattler tale" the other day. What happened, and I mentioned this to you at the time, Mitchell got drunk at a party and fell on me in the presence of Kay Graham and Alsop (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: When, when, when?

EHRlichman: well, this was when he was Attorney General.

PRESIDENT: Oh.

EHRlichman: And uh, came down on me very hard at that time.

PRESIDENT: Oh. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: He was too liberal

EHRlichman: I was too liberal and I was misadvising you and I had to get out of the White House and on and on and on.

HALDEMAN: This is typical John talk.

EHRlichman: Uhh, Alsop never forgot that.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

EHRlichman: And so...

PRESIDENT: Also, I remember, too, with regard, John, uhh, in that connection something Bob told me. Remember, Bob you said you talked to Mitchell about what we should do about (unintelligible) and he said, "Haldeman, "uh, no, I mean, "Ehrlichman and Colson must go."

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Well, then Alsop put together the fact that I was the one who talked to Mitchell down here a week ago Saturday...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: ...and that the whole conversation and he made a story on that.

PRESIDENT: Sure. Okay, but go ahead on that, that's, that's a side issue.

HALDEMAN: Okay, his point there is, though, he says Mitchell's already lied, and you don't know what he'll do next, and that worry-- he sees that as a late (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: We all, we all agree with that is that Mitchell is, Mitchell has lied once.

EHRlichman: At least.
(Laughter)

HALDEMAN: There's, there's no way of disagreeing with that because he's told conflicting stories so one of them has to be a lie. He said he wasn't at a meeting, he said he was at a meeting, both of them under oath...

PRESIDENT: Oh?

HALDEMAN: ...or at least we're told that.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Tape noise). (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible). That's, that's a curious thing. Nobody seems to get very upset about it.

EHRlichman: Is Petersen telling you anything about Mitchell's problems in New York with that Grand Jury?

PRESIDENT: Not yet.

EHRlichman: I understand they're very close to indicting him for perjury.

HALDEMAN: John says tomorrow. As we go over this, uh, you should operate on the basic approach that first you have to go back to the fundamental issues: the legal issue that you're involved legally, get out now; on the moral PR issue, you've got to assume that they probably can nail you on something...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...in some way, but you don't know that. You've got to assume that if you are accused, people will believe the accusation, the tendency will be to believe it...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...this question's (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and you've got to, you've got to go on the basis that whatever the facts are, they'll come out, that you've got to be prepared for the possible deliberate charge against an innocent person even if it's a lie.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: You've got to be prepared that anyone who touched the money or knew the purposes of the money were to buy off witnesses...

EHRLICHMAN: To defend.

HALDEMAN: ...obstruct justice, will be, will be guilty in the public mind, and that the worst possible picture will be painted of anybody and everybody. "Now", he says, "if you move out, if you resign, two assumptions will immediately be made by the public, and these will be total in your view. One, you're guilty, and two, the President knew about it."

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: "So, that will not, that act will not relieve, the President of any immediate problem that he now has."

PRESIDENT: Absolutely right.

HALDEMAN: The only possible thing it does is preclude the possibility of adding to that problem, as new revelations come out if you know that they are going to come out. He says, "It won't hurt you in the long haul to resign because ultimately the truth will, be known, and either you are in or you are out and whatever that is will be known, whether you, whether you're in the White House or whether you're not." But, on the short term basis, is, there's an enormous increase in vulnerability for you if I get out, especially against the deliberate lying.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: "So, then," he says, "so it gets back to what can Mitchell or Dean put on you?" He said, "One thing I you better remember, you could ride out PR vulnerabilities, but you cannot ride out legal culpability because legal culpability you have."

PRESIDENT: Now, by that, he means, uhh, any kind of an indictment (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, not indictment--indictment that isn't on a valid charge, that is, where I have to plead guilty, or, or, where I wouldn't be able to successfully defend myself.

EHRlichman: Right.

HALDEMAN: Uhh, he says, "You, you've got to make some decisions. And I appreciate the President's feeling that you should. And you ought to decide now what to do. You ought to stick with it and not go back and relook at it unless the facts materially change and then you ought to, you have to relook at it." He said, "The President has told me that he is convinced that you've done nothing illegal. I have to say, Bob," he said, "that it is my feeling that if that is what the President believes, then he has the duty to stand by you. Then," he said, "don't resign just because you think

that solves the problem, because At, doesn't. It aggravates the problem. Once you're out, the enemies, both the press the political, have a wide open shot at the President, and they have a wide open shot at you, especially the people who want to lie." He said, "The fundamental question is whether the President survives in a viable fashion." Then, that brought him back and he says, "I don't know, maybe you shouldn't even take leave. You've just got to go on the best guess as to what all the people involved here are going to do." He said, "If you're innocent and clearly innocent, then don't move a penny. But face the fact that they can still make you look bad even though you are innocent. Then, comes back to the basic question of fundamental innocence. You've got to look at this on the legal basis, the PR basis, your personal jeopardy, and the President's position. You've got to analyze all those factors." He says, "I have to believe that if a man is innocent, he should stand his ground. He should not move. But the problem of advising on this is that I don't know the facts, so I have to deal with the law of probabilities." He said, "The worst problem is you don't know the facts, so you have to deal with the law of probability."

PRESIDENT: We may know the facts. Uhh, but we don't know what's gonna come out.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) All right, let me say we have a pretty good...

HALDEMAN: Well I think we've got--if we know the facts I think we ought'a assume they'll come out.

PRESIDENT: ...that's my point, go on.

HALDEMAN: "So, then, "he says, "go back to the fundamentals. Get your lawyer's advice." Then he goes through (unintelligible) all people who will decide the right thing (unintelligible)." Then he said, "That my final advice to you is, "he said, Nellie's just come in and she's sitting here on the bed and she says to give you her love and to tell you that she's standing by you..."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...and she doesn't believe any of this"...and he said, "Don't ever take, a needless risk. (Tape noise) make any move unless you know it has to be made. It's not enough to say that you can obviate your association with the President PR wise by taking a leave or, for, by resigning. No matter what you do, the President will be affected."

PRESIDENT: No question.

HALDEMAN: "And your moving out will definitely be an adverse move to both you and the President in the short run. So, that you've got to weigh is, is that adversity worth whatever you gain by it." Now, that's quite a bit different because he spelled it out in a lot more detail.

PRESIDENT: That he's thought it through more.

HALDEMAN: Than where it came out with Ron and...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) You know usually, (unintelligible), Kelly that it comes out and says (unintelligible) well, thinks about it, says well maybe you've got to think it through.

EHRlichman: Pardon? (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Now, I sure don't want to fault Ron on his every...

PRESIDENT: No, no, no. Ron reported to me exactly what he'd said.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible). And...

PRESIDENT: And (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) says to me I think he, I think that's, that's what is what he said.

HALDEMAN: What Rogers said to me was, he said, "Bob, I can't decide this because I don't know the facts, and I keep saying every time Ron calls me and I even said it to the President when I talked to him, that he's got to decide." He said, "I believe that your case is going to be especially tough, and there is a problem of how you can do your job with this stuff hanging there..."

PRESIDENT: That's the point he later...

HALDEMAN: ...and he said, "The way I lean upon this is that you should take a leave of absence until its cleared up."

PRESIDENT: Well, did he get leave of absence?

HALDEMAN: Yes, sir, he raised it. That's why I raised it with Connally.

PRESIDENT: See he was the leave of absence man, (unintelligible) basically the (unintelligible) opinion of Connally was the two best judgments we've got here. (Tape noise) leave of absence thing on the basis of fairness (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Rogers then said, he said, "I don't know anything about John, and I just (unintelligible)," but he said, "I keep, on all of this, I keep coming back to where I was, and I'd called him saying I wanted to talk to him, and he said he didn't want to talk with me." (Unintelligible). He said I did--he "was concerned about his position."

PRESIDENT: Yes.

HALDEMAN: He said, "I can't be in the position of being an arbitor between you and the President."

PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah, yeah.

HALDEMAN: "I'm not asking that, Bill, I'm asking about, all I had in mind was asking your advice. Because I'm concerned that the decision is being made, that, made, being made on the wrong basis or for the wrong reasons."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: "If that's the case, I want to be sure that all the opposing views..."

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: "...to that decision, regardless of wh--how they affect me, are, are weighed and I, I see you, Rogers, as being..."

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: "...the most likely guy to make that possible, because nobody else can talk to the President about this."

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: "...and the President is in one helluva position because normally in these things..."

PRESIDENT: I have somebody I can talk to, you'd do it or John would.

HALDEMAN: "...[unintelligible] involved in it. John was an advocate in in some areas, that, that, I never was really, like on foreign policy things or anything else."

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: You had somebody here who could argue the opposite of whatever was coming up. Bill said, "I must not be in the position of making a decision. [Unintelligible] asking you that." He said, "Talk to the President, he wants to talk to you..."

PRESIDENT: Good.

HALDEMAN: ...and he said, "Its important that you talk it through with him. [Unintelligible] basis." Then he said, "If after you've talked with the President, you still feel that, that the approach is wrong or that the understanding's wrong or anything else from the standpoint of the Presidency, then I'd be happy to talk with you about it and hear what your problem is [unintelligible] (tape noise)..."

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: ...come out with.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Uh...

PRESIDENT: They're both right--being good lawyers in saying, "Look, we can't make a judgment on it without all the facts."

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) the facts.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) the basis (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I think it is, because...

PRESIDENT: We've got, we've got, we've got to look at, what I'd like to do basically, is to look at the facts which I discussed, of course, with the lawyers, the legal matter, first. (Tape noise). The facts on the (tape noise) question of let us suppose, let us suppose (unintelligible) (tape noises), the Grand Jury (tape noise) let me, let me get through here just a minute, say one or two things that cannot wait. The lawyers with me again lean on Petersen, direct him to get this goddamn thing, uh, closed up. And, uh, Dick said, "I will." I said uh, "Can I tell Petersen with regard to Bob and John making (unintelligible) they've been wanting their, their counsel to, they've been wanting to (tape noise) their story to the prosecution, you know...and to the Grand Jury."

HALDEMAN: They did that last week.

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Not really. They said, "We're ready any time." But the point is they left it with the fact that they, that they would be in touch with them, they, they did it a little different, they--What they're really getting at, Bob, is to take a more affirmative stance on that, in other words (unintelligible) publically.

HALDEMAN: They hit us on this yesterday...

PRESIDENT: Publicly.

HALDEMAN: ...and we said, "Wait."

PRESIDENT: Okay.

HALDEMAN (Unintelligible) our lawyers did it.
(Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, no problem. I'm " not suggesting, uhh, after kicked it around. You see 'cause they were trying to (unintelligible) it's really not fair to have lawyers, uhh, trying to pick up a PR problem here. But they kicked it around. I, said well if you wrote a letter to this sort, it should be let it out. I said, "We have no objection (unintelligible) PR." I said, "Now, the other thing is, with regard to Bob and John, if, if, you're not, if, if you take if you take a leave of absence for coming out either way, it is necessary to do something, uhh, most, most everybody agrees with that." By something--I mean by that, uhh, (tape noise) for your sakes and perhaps, uhh, also for the Presidency, let me say in terms of, of uh, your sakes first because (tape noise) being a wild crescendo of leaks, and, and explorative statements, and so forth, just beating the shit out of you (unintelligible) without your taking a strong affirmative position that, "By God, we want to be heard, we want to be cleared, and we're innocent. "In other words, I just think it has to be said. Also, from the standpoint of the President, the President's got to be in' a position that he has talked to his (unintelligible) and they want to be heard, they want to be, as early as possible, they want to be cleared, and so forth, and so on. Now, (tape noise) but anyway, we'll talk about that defensive tactic, uhh, the, which I think would come into play, uhh, in fact, in any event, but whatever they do, whatever they do, do that, whatever you do you cannot just sit and wait, you and John, and the Grand Jury finally goes its deadly process, leaks come out of there, and the whole damn thing appears in Anderson's column and then in addition to that every son-of-a-bitch puts out statements to the effect that, like

the Post, (unintelligible) "the President was told in December about the..."let me say, I talked to Colson many times you know. No such conversation ever took place--he, he, would he, he would have talked with, uh--Did he ever say that to you, John?

Bob. Bob, did he ever say it to you? He might not have, said it to John, but did he ever say it to you?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman

HALDEMAN: You know what he said to me is, You've got to hunker down, don't let anybody out, maintain executive privilege on everybody...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...because...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). I thought maybe I'd lost my goddamn mind...

HALDEMAN: Colson's line has been the solidest of anybody here, and the most consistent of anybody here...

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...total stonewall it until the last few weeks. Certainly...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...I mean, just total, almost to the point of not co-operating. You know, he would panic any time there was any thought of any disclosure of anything.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, he said, "Don't, don't do it, don't do this..."

HALDEMAN: "Don't give out privileged--don't give immunities."

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: He's changed his PR-advisors recently (unintelligible) On this business of prosecutor, did they tell you about panic at the prosecutor's office right now?

PRESIDENT: Well, yes.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) you know...

PRESIDENT: The panic because of the leaks.

EHRLICHMAN: Kleindienst apparently has landed on them and has charged them in line with your comment of Kleindienst, has charged the prosecutor with being responsible for the leaks. The judges...

PRESIDENT: My comments to Kldndienst were made, uh, not last Friday but the Sunday that he came in and asked...

EHRLICHMAN: ...they were also made at the Cabinet meetings...

HALDEMAN: He made some at the Cabinet meeting, you remember?

EHRLICHMAN: You said at the Cabinet meeting you, you said "Those leaks are coming from the prosecution." Kleindienst said, "They're coming from the Grand Jury." You turned around and snapped at him and said, "Dick, let's not be ridiculous, Grand Jurors don't keep things of, things of..."

PRESIDENT: of, of testimony.

EHRLICHMAN: Well...

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: The upshot of this now--the upshot of this now...

EHRLICHMAN: Let me tell you. Yesterday, that...

PRESIDENT: Wasn't that just as well?

EHRLICHMAN: Sure. I think it's great.

HALDEMAN: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

RESTRICTED-"D"

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...and, uh...

EHRlichman: Plus you see, they are being hit by this refusing, this lawyer of that guy with the six cases of stuff...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...says that Glanz-, that Silbert was engaged in a massive cover-up and wouldn't accept this evidence.

HALDEMAN: ...then the 15...

PRESIDENT: Oh, incidentally, I asked for your, I asked, I said, "I've got to know one thing." I called Petersen this morning and made a date for 5:30 this afternoon (Unintelligible) right time to get him. And I said, "Now," I said, "I don't want anything about what happened at Grand Jury (unintelligible) I've got to know. It's reported in the press, you've got the name of the person who got it. Who was it? Was it a member of the White House staff?" He said, "No." I said (unintelligible). He said, he volunteered, "A fellow named Shepherd."

HALDEMAN: Who?

PRESIDENT: I don't know him. Shepherd. I said, "Who is he?" And he used the term, "He's going to come before the Grand Jury tomorrow." He said, "He's sort of a con man."

HALDEMAN: Con man?

PRESIDENT: Yes, Understand, I know, I know nothing about this except that it smacks, (unintelligible) it smacks basically of Hunt...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...trying to clean his office out, getting it to Shepherd. Hunt is the kind of a guy...

HALDEMAN: Is it shepherd like a fellow who takes care of sheep? Shepherd. We have a fellow on the staff here named Shepherd.

EHRlichman: We do?

HALDEMAN: Yeah. On the Domestic Counsel staff.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) He's a lawyer, too.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I asked him, he said he lived in Alexandria.

HALDEMAN: Yeah?

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) live in Alexandria?

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible) he does now.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Has he been here all five years?

HALDEMAN: He's been here as a White House Fellow and we kept him on. He's been here a long time.

PRESIDENT: Did he work in Colson's office?

HALDEMAN: No, he worked, uh, uh, he handled Justice Department affairs for us.

EHRlichman: Oops.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**)

HALDEMAN: Never had anything to do with that.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Jeff Shepherd. (Tape noise) That I gotta know. A fellow named Shepherd is called before the Grand Jury, you give me call.

EHRlichman: John Ehrlichman. Will you get me Jeff Shepherd, please? (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: That's a shock. (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Yeah, John Ehrlichman

RESTRICTED-"D"

(Hangs up telephone.) He said there used to be a George Shepherd in OEP but he doesn't know of any other Shepherds around here. He said, he's, he's clean.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, OEP, well OEP, is not.

EHRlichman: No, no., he, he, Jeff Shepherd, says he's clean. Doesn't know Peter Wolf, never heard of him.

PRESIDENT: Right. That's enough. All right, fine. Go ahead, John, on your stuff. (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Oh, well, I was just going to say that all the judges of the District Court (unintelligible) and, uh, they landed on the prosecutor, apparently the Grand Jury (unintelligible), the Grand Jury to investigate the Grand Jury, wouldn't I. So the prosecutor's now catching it from three sides, uh, and when our fellows dropped in to see Glanzer, last night, they were down at the courthouse taking depositions. They stopped by to see if they could pick up any tidbits, and Glanzer was just up on the, on the chandelier, and, obviously (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, obviously they're concerned about that. Uh, incidentally, I heard before you just came here (Tape noise) before we get into that. Let's, let's come down to (tape noise) solutions therefore. However (tape noise) more incentive (unintelligible). Do you favor it?

EHRLICHMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: That's the problem. That's the...

EHRLICHMAN: Sure. No question.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) (tape noise) Look down the road (tape noise) (unintelligible) and second (unintelligible). Let them present their case. Uh, we'll, we'll keep them all (unintelligible) we're not, uh, we're not (unintelligible) enough time (unintelligible) anxious, willing--and I am making no offer and I insist that you, that I've got to have my people. I want my people (unintelligible) by then. How about that?

EHRLICHMAN: And then you want a report

PRESIDENT: And I want a report from you, I want you to do it, you call (unintelligible) questions if necessary, but I've got to have this for my own (unintelligible) where I am. (Unintelligible) And third, (unintelligible) you ask him to put down for me, which I don't know whether he can do this (unintelligible) or not, but I ask him (unintelligible) got information (unintelligible). Well, he's already, I said, based on what you have today, (unintelligible) what is your case, potentially, against these men?

EHRLICHMAN: Likewise, I would think he'd want it against Dean, uh, to know whether there's an indictment upcoming or what the...

PRESIDENT: Well, that's right. (Tape noise) talk about the Dean problem. The Dean problem is a goddamn tough one (unintelligible) because, uh, I heard by this conversation, uh, (unintelligible) (tape noise) threatens (unintelligible) (tape noise)

PRESIDENT:

(cont.) Counsel which is not granted with that understanding (tape noise) (unintelligible) (tape noise) the President gets caught in obstruction of justice. Now what in the name of Christ he means by that, I don't know. I mean, unless. He's, probably (unintelligible) trying to keep Petersen, from (tape noise).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) reported to him (unintelligible) round about, about your phone call from Camp David. (Tape noise)

PRESIDENT: Immunity?

EHRLICHMAN: No. About not getting into national security stuff.

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) I'll ask him.

EHRLICHMAN: Could have been very direct. In other words, if you order Petersen not to take that (unintelligible) he may have started to give it (unintelligible) and Petersen said, "I've been ordered not to give that information..."

PRESIDENT: Not on national security, no.

EHRLICHMAN: ...he may be...

PRESIDENT: Is that obstruction of justice?

EHRLICHMAN: No. but, what Dean is, what Dean is obviously doing here (unintelligible) a, he's, he's trying to construct a big dam cluttered by, in my opinion. I think he, he's being very, uh...

PRESIDENT: Well, I told Dean, too, I said, I said, "Now, John, anything with me is privileged, and anything with national security is privileged." I okayed on that.

EHRLICHMAN: Let's--I think that's really sort of an open question in all this...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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 (*to me because of*) 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 adroitly 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 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
(cont.) 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
(cont.) 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.

HALDEMAN: 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: Is Dick thinking he's going to be indicted?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: But not for...

HALDEMAN: But not for, not for that conversation...

EHRLICHMAN: Dick, Dick has been--he can tell, 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 sound tough and...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Point out that that was triggered.

EHRLICHMAN: If we know, obviously, knowledge is,...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...is terribly important here.

PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and., uh, this guy is using this to lever you however, he is using this or he's using something else, I don't know what the something else would be. He certainly can't use the Hunt escapade on the coast because that was totally outside of your knowledge, and it doesn't reach you. Uh...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: Oh, well, yeah, but that isn't our problem here as I see it.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: He's got to have a lever that works on you...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and, uh, so it's got to involve your personal cognizance in this thing, uh, so...

PRESIDENT: I asked Petersen whether, uh, I talked to Dean, and Dean said before he pled, he would like to talk to (unintelligible) and Petersen said no, so I'll find out from Petersen what Dean's story is.

EHRLICHMAN: Well, I think Dean is...

HALDEMAN: Did Dean go to the Grand Jury today?

PRESIDENT: I don't know. No, not yet. They haven't made a deal yet.

EHRLICHMAN: Is he, is he thinking of making a deal, Silbert and Dean?

PRESIDENT: I guess. Well, a deal, no; his, his attorneys are still at arms length on Dean testifying, to use his terms.

EHRLICHMAN: All, all I'm saying is that, that before you, before you decide, I think we have to look at the ultimate problem here...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and I must say that that may not totally resolve the ultimate problem. I'm trying to think of where your problems are in this. I don't think we can brush them off by just saying, that, that the problems of being able to govern, or the problems of...

PRESIDENT: No.

EHRLICHMAN: ...the press (unintelligible), and so on, or any of that kind. I think there's a whole new problem here...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and there're going to be a lot of...

PRESIDENT: Whether I was involved in obstruction of justice.

EHRLICHMAN: ...or in the bugging, or in, you know, any of these episodes and there're going to be a hundred and fifty-eight reporters in this town digging away at the individuals involved in this case...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...for the next year, next two years, trying to get some guy to crack.

PRESIDENT: So, we get, so we get, get them, so we get at least the situation, uh, as far as we know, uh, uh, La Costa I heard about you remember, you didn't talk to me about it (unintelligible) Bob, let's listen to these conversations, and what the hell Dean, Dean could have discussed that. I don't remember specifically, you know, but, he could have discussed the fact. Well, we've got the problem, when he made his, what he calls his "cancer on the heart of the Presidency speech," which he may, which was more (unintelligible). He

PRESIDENT: could have discussed there the problem of these,
(cont.) of, of, uh, defendants, and, you know what I
mean?

HALDEMAN: Yeah (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: But the payoff, uh, uh, and whether I said
anything which would of led him to believe that
he should pay them off...

HALDEMAN: Let's...

PRESIDENT: ...I don't think so.

HALDEMAN: ...Let's not worry about it. It's either, it's
either there or it isn't...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...but, let's see what's there...

PRESIDENT: And if it is?...

HALDEMAN: ...let's listen to it...

PRESIDENT: ...if it is? Then we have to play in terms of I
was having to find out what is implication was.

EHRlichman: I think then it becomes very important how you
couch your decision on being...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: ...and you can, you can go one of several ways
depending on what the, what the problem is, and
you can (unintelligible). You can pre-empt this
pretty much, I think, by the way you do it, but
uh, that's, that's really a separate subject
from what happens here, and, uh, uh, seems to
me...

PRESIDENT: Did he come up and talk to you about the Bittman
conversation?

EHRlichman: Yes.

PRESIDENT: How did he present it to you? After he talked to me?

EHRlichman: No, I don't think so. I think this was before he talked to you, but I'm not sure.

HALDEMAN: You don't know because, we don't, we can't still, I still can't fix when he talked to you on it.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) He talked to me around the twentieth.

PRESIDENT: Then, Bob, after we talked, you don't think you were in the room now do you when he talked to me?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I remember the conversation.

PRESIDENT: You do?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but I think it was, see, I keep--I remember...

PRESIDENT: Is memory about like I stated?

HALDEMAN: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Did we say, "Let's go out and get the money"?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I don't remember the specifics, I just remember the...

PRESIDENT: Was there any--do you remember my saying, "Look, we've got to get the money, can't you find somebody to get the money?"

HALDEMAN: You didn't--I don't remember your saying, "We've got to get it. I remember you saying, "Can't some--we ought to be able to raise that kind of money, or..."

PRESIDENT: "A million dollars."

HALDEMAN: "...there ought to be that kind of money available."

PRESIDENT: "Yeah, a million dollars."

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible) something like that, yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: But you didn't say to do it, or that you would, or anything like that. Other than that, I don't recall, but I can't fix going through the logs and everthing. I can't fix when that conversation was, this, this..

PRESIDENT: Well, you've got to find out, got to find out. And then if we find that to be the case, if there's anything that I said at that point, I mean, you can understand, John, I could have talked with him about it, we were talking (unintelligible) whole goddamn thing, of course. We talked about it (unintelligible). My point is that if we find that out, if we have to couch, we have to remember what our, what the line is and the line has got to be, "I was conducting an investigation and finding out what, where this thing went."

EHRlichman: Well, I'm sure that's the case because the timing has to be in the frame of March 19, 20, 21.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Uh, let me...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) the investigation.

EHRlichman: ...let me answer your question about my conversation with...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...he came, first of all (unintelligible) his version of the conversation, as I understand it, is that, and we have this pegged pretty well because of the conversations I've had and worked this back. (Clears throat). His conversation with me was, he came and told me about, uh, Bittman making this demand on behalf of Hunt,

EHRLICHMAN: and I simply referred him back to Mitchell. Now, that's not quite accurate, uh, I can, I can...

PRESIDENT: You say that is what he has said?

EHRLICHMAN: That's what he has said.

PRESIDENT: How do you know?

EHRLICHMAN: Well, because he told Bob this, in a long conversation which would--is in effect his bill of particulars...

PRESIDENT: But when did he...

EHRLICHMAN: ...It's rather interesting. I have a very, I didn't realize I had it, I have quite a voluminous set of notes that Dean reports to me on things in general in this investigation period when he was up at Camp David, obviously spinning out his web...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and he tried out bits and pieces, that, not bits and pieces, he tried (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Did he bring me into the conversation about Bittman? He did not.

EHRLICHMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Did he bring me in the conversation about (unintelligible)?

EHRLICHMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: And in point of fact, I'm sure, unless I'm dreaming, that he said (unintelligible) or something. In point of fact, what, what did happen was that he and I had a conversation and I raised the point of this being an endless set of demands...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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EHRlichman: ...and said that for my part, I would rather test the privilege on national security, which I knew was involved...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Oh, that reminds me of one thing. Dean said that...

REEL 2 BEGINS

REEL TWO BEGINS

PRESIDENT: The, uh, basically, the Bittman thing. Was--he said that was blackmail. He said no, that was not blackmailing the Presidency that would blackmail Ehrlichman.

EHRLICHMAN: Um hum. Um hum. And that's the way he presented to me, in fact, ya know, there's a point here that's never been raised in all the discoveries, this triggers, that triggers my memory on it. (unintelligible) Dean at one...

REEL ONE ENDS

...point was very intrigued with using blackmail as a defense.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: On the whole cover-up operation.

PRESIDENT: He told me that. Early on.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) that, that was the thing--we could develop a case, that it was, that, that was a legal defense. That we weren't, we weren't obstructing justice. We were victims of blackmail.

PRESIDENT: But you hav--, you have...

EHRLICHMAN: It never made any sense, it's not a (unintelligible) spelling out, spinning out...

PRESIDENT: Well.

EHRLICHMAN: What I, what I did uh, as soon as he presented this to me was to check my files and counter probe the conflict that he got, to see what the--to refresh my recollections so when--the whole chain of circumstances had been, I became convinced in that review that the matter was not as serious as I had sorta carried around in my thought that it was in terms of culpability. But more than that, that it was a legitimate

EHRLICHMAN: national security subject and that we are to stonewall it, but there was no sense in starting to buckle in to this kind of a demand. So that was my second response to Dean. He then apparently went back to Mitchell and we have only (unintelligible) a kind of glancing, uh, reference to it in Mitchell, Dean, Haldeman, Ehrlichman meeting of the following day, which would have been about the twenty-second or third, where Dean says to John, something like, uh, what's the status of that matter or John raised it with him and they went back and forth, and Mitchell finally said "Well, I think it's taken care of." Now that...

PRESIDENT: Dean raised it?

EHRLICHMAN: Well, Dean or Mitchell raised it in that case.

HALDEMAN: I have. I may be wrong. But maybe I've just convinced myself that...

PRESIDENT: Mitchell...

HALDEMAN: I have a very strong recollection on that, that it was in a weak reference, about the middle-- there was a lull in the discussion and Mitchell turned to Dean, said what have you done about the, the Hunt matter or about that problem we had yesterday or some--I'm not sure how he had identified it. He said, "What have you done about the problem." I was fascinated with this because I was watching the son-of-a-bitch at work, and trying to figure out, what the hell he was doing himself. So what have you done about that problem? Dean looked a little confused and said, "Well, uh, uh, nothing." And, uh, Mitchell said, "Well, I think, I guess it's o-, I guess it's taken care of" And it was that fast. I mean, it was...

PRESIDENT: You reported that to me.

HALDEMAN: Like a total of about three or four sentences.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Out of, uh, uh, a three or four hour meeting, uh,...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: And I have a strong feeling that's all that was done there.

PRESIDENT: Well, look. It's very important that you go back and just--that you, uh, get the, the tapes of everything we had with Dean and see what the hell, uh, has been discussed. I can assure you that, uh, we may have covered a large part of some of those things, because basically, uh, he raised lots of questions and that I think...

EHRLICHMAN: About Watergate?

PRESIDENT: I have no recollection, John, of ever hearing, no recollection of, except the obstruction of justice thing he raised. I said what is the obstruction of justice--have we run into the legal s--, uh, uh, I said, is It obstruction of justice to help the defendants? No. Uh, if that's the purpose. But it is obstruction of justice, it's to keep them quiet. And I said, well the question is the end. We went into that (unintelligible) and so forth and so on.

EHRLICHMAN: How, uh, uh, to just, to just tie this down. Bob and I have been, of course, rigorously going through every scrap of paper we have, trying to reconstruct. I am, I am forcibly struck with the realization that I began to understand this case, what Dean's involvement was and what Mitchell and Magruder's involvement was, only in the month of March, this year. And that, this all began surfacing about the time that Dean realized that he had his (unintelligible) and began constructing his theory of the case and then began unloading them on us, item by item and bit by bit...

HALDEMAN: Brainwashing us.

EHRlichman: Yeah. I mean, over and over he'd work you over, every time he'd get you, he'd work on a line like, uh, I knew that he had told me after the meeting that we'd--they'd cancelled the intelligence operations. He musta told me that thirty times.

PRESIDENT: He said what? Dean.

EHRlichman: That, that he had, he, that he had reported to me after the second meeting with Mitchell and all, that, that they had gone through a, another shot at a, a, ridiculous intelligence operation. That...

PRESIDENT: ...that he informed you.

EHRlichman: ...that he and Mitchell had turned it down. And that he felt that there was no profit, profit in pursuing that any further and that held like to, uh, pull out of it completely and didn't I agree, and he says I agree, and he had no further contact with any intelligence planning from then on. Now, I suspect that Mitchell says and some of the other evidence says, that he was in the third meeting. That he may have been involved in another meeting after that. He was using all this (unintelligible) to try and get me as a corroborating witness that he wasn't. Now, so now I don't know what I, what I believe.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Okay. Let me suggest this, that, uh, before I meet with Petersen, I want you to listen to those things.

EHRlichman: I can't do it. It's twelve hours of tapes. I .may be able to focus in on it, uh, (unintelligible) Bittman.

PRESIDENT: Right. (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Yeah. I can, I think I can...

PRESIDENT: Well, I, I'd like to get it all. Well,...

EHRlichman: Well, I think I know which meeting it was.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah. Can you do that? Uh,...

EHRlichman: I think I can get, I think I can zero in on that one. If I miss, I can work out from that two ways and come up with a pretty fast (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) That's what his really saying, to, uh, Higby wasn't it?

EHRlichman: I assume so. I, that's the only thing I can think (unintelligible). It's a danger of assuming that. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah.

EHRlichman: The thing that impressed Higby most out of that conversation was that Dean was totally cold, totally, uh, not much different from the old John Dean. And he said, "Larry, I have nothing to fear here I fear no man in this world." (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) every man involved.

EHRlichman: Larry said afterward he acted as if he were in (unintelligible). Dean is terribly afraid, uh, and this's come up two or three times. He's terribly afraid of his inability to carry off the lie. He's afraid that...

PRESIDENT: Slight hand shake.

EHRlichman: Yes, he told me that earlier, that...

HALDEMAN: There this question that popped up with Mitchell and Dean. (Tape noise) Goddamn. You know, it's something, uh, they're gonna take into their minds, somehow, the assumption that Dean may be lying and try to break him too. (Tape noise) use Dean as a witness under the (unintelligible) they also got to look at Dean as a principal.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) Part of the reason, uh, we gotta get down there and talk to this U.S. Attorney...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. How do you face this? We're quite cold. You're not--what Dean can say about you, it would be your word against Dean, where they're concerned is (tape noise) Dean saying something about the President. Opportunity (unintelligible) to damn President Nixon. Damn cold on that point. (Unintelligible-tape noise) we can all be, uh, (unintelligible), Mr. President, and all that sort of thing. Obstruction. I don't know (unintelligible). Uh, you bartering for trouble and probably not with Dean. You have an individual here who's out to do various things...

HALDEMAN: You've got the other side of it though. If it comes down to Dean versus the President. Dean won't be believed either.

PRESIDENT: Well...

HALDEMAN: And...

PRESIDENT: Well...

HALDEMAN: And well,...

PRESIDENT: That's a terrible charge though.

HALDEMAN: It...

PRESIDENT: You don't know what he has (unintelligible). But, if you think (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, I'll ask him where the (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: If we could leave that for a moment...

HALDEMAN: Let's just stay with it for a second.

PRESIDENT: Or--well, I mean, let me say--yeah, I'm gonna stay with it, but I, but I made the point. The point that I 'm also making though is that before I meet with Petersen tonight, I want to know what the damn tapes are. Now, the earlier tapes, I am sure dealt almost exclusively with, with executive privilege or that sort of thing.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah,...

PRESIDENT: ...(Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...but, your meeting with Dean and Moore was on the subject of how to deal with the Ervin Committee that time.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: That's how, it all started. At, at least the way...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...what, what Dean (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) hurt and all that sort of stuff and so forth and so on. But, at a later point you see, Dean may have decided in his own mind, well I got to get the President involved and that's probably why he told me about it.

HALDEMAN: No. One day, one day on an afternoon

PRESIDENT: You don't think so?

EHRlichman: Well I think, I think...

HALDEMAN: On an afternoon you told him apparently by phone--you didn't see him from what I could gather because he apparently talked to me afterwards. You said, "John, I want you to come in here tomorrow morning at nine o'clock

HALDEMAN: early in the morning and I want you to give me the entire story, everything, all the facts, because I don't have all the specifics." Dean called me and said, "The President wants me to do this. I, uh, should I get into everything?" I said, "Yes, sir. That's a privileged communication."

PRESIDENT: But you don't know the date of that.

HALDEMAN: Yes I do.

PRESIDENT: When was that?

HALDEMAN: I think it was the 20th. I can check but I don't have it right here, but, I have it. The reason you called him, one of the reasons--and I told Dean at that time, give him everything and then the next morning you met with Ehrlichman for an hour and then Dean came in, met with Dean for about two hours, the last forty minutes of which you had me in.

PRESIDENT: Probably to talk about this.

HALDEMAN: I think so. That must have been the time that we talked about this because, uh, I recollect it as being an afternoon, but that afternoon you met with Ehrlichman and Dean and with me, but it was in this office not over there and I know the meeting that I remember was in the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: This one about our concern was uh, the...

EHRlichman: The reason you called Dean and asked for this information was you were on our backs, very hard, to get a statement out of him.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And we kept telling you, we couldn't, that we kept running into blind alleys and there doesn't seem any way to crack this. And finally we

EHRlichman: suggested to you that you talk to Dean, because Dean was saying to us, rolling his eyes and saying, uh, you don't wanna know that or I don't wanna get into that with you. And we could never crack this. And so, we decided that one way to satisfy you on this would be for you to hear from Dean in a privileged conversation, what the facts were. Now we decided that without ourselves knowing what the facts were.

PRESIDENT: You know the date of that. Well, as soon as we can...

HALDEMAN: These things (unintelligible) find out.

PRESIDENT: Well, it's very important that, uh, see I didn't uh,...

EHRlichman: See this came out of La Costa. La Costa was for two reasons. One was to talk about what we do about the Ervin problem. The other was that all though my notes of the proceeding month, you're saying damn it, we gotta get a statement out. We gotta get something out that will satisfy (unintelligible). Remember the (unintelligible) letter. We gotta get something out that we can show (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, I have a fairly good, I think, record during that whole period, uh, March 21st 'til about (unintelligible)...

EHRliciiman: This goes back

PRESIDENT: ...I told Ziegler today to say why didn't he do it before March 21st. He said well, on March 21st he personally began his own investigation. Before that he had relied on others and now he personally, which I don't...

EHRlichman: March 21st is the morning you met with Dean. There must be, there must be, uh, twelve or fifteen different places in my notes and conversations with you over the proceeding six months where you are banging away on the necessity of getting this to happen.

HALDEMAN: I have it too. 'If I--you know, time after time.

EHRLICHMAN: And we kept coming back to you and saying...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: ...uh, we can't.

HALDEMAN: We will. We'll say...we'll we'll get that.

EHRLICHMAN: Uh, but, but we kept coming back to you with a dry hole. We, we sat for five hours in La Costa and came up with three sentences. Now why was that? Well, uh, it, it, for the reason I've just suggested.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible with tape noise).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible with tape noise/**REMOVED**). I think my recollection of the Bittman conversations is about correct then.

HALDEMAN: I do too.

PRESIDENT: I, uh--you know what I mean? For, uh, blackmail--I didn't. I simply, the only thing that I, uh., it's unfortunate, uh, to, I said, "Well, John, look what it would cost to keep (unintelligible) for four years? (Unintelligible) dollars. Well, I guess we could get that kind of money." You remember how I said it.

HALDEMAN: But then we turned it off. I mean this, this was...

PRESIDENT: Well, I didn't get that man. I think, I think that somebody said that my God, you jus--, you can't do that. You know what I mean?

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Let's not worry about it. Let me listen to (unintelligible),

EHRLICHMAN: Well, right here try and disarm him. He may--
uh, uh, I'm morally certain he does not know
that he is on tape. And, uh,

PRESIDENT: I wonder if he has, has a tape himself.

EHRLICHMAN: That might be. That might be, and...

PRESIDENT: Is it possible that he carries a tape? Does he
do that? Do you know of?

EHRLICHMAN: I don't know that he does that. But if he ever
did...

PRESIDENT: I would doubt that he would to that
(unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Now that that point is raised. Larry said he
carried something in with him (unintelligible) a
tape recorder (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, he carries with him, when he came with me,
he didn't have a briefcase. But, can he carry
it in his hip or something?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible). But it's done.

PRESIDENT: It is?

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah. Those things almost always go haywire.

HALDEMAN: Then he can't use that tape anymore. (Tape
noise) privileged conversation.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) tape of a privilege
conversation...

PRESIDENT: (Laughs). Privileged conversation is all going
out the window

EHRLICHMAN: That's the point, if privilege were of any use
here, why, uh, uh, you know, we wouldn't have a
problem. But I, I think that what he's, what
he's doing here trying to block (unintelligible)
President on the basis that no confession of a
crime is privileged and if a President's guilty

EHRLICHMAN: of a crime, and that, by golly, he'd better get
(cont.) immunity in this thing. Or that's what's gonna happen.

HALDEMAN: Okay. Let's assume the worst then, which is that that's exactly what it is. Then you don't have only one route. You say, immunity is the price (unintelligible), we have to pay. That, that we--my argument would be that that's the worst thing you can do, because that then puts you in as a permanent hostage for the rest of your life to, to John Dean and, and if you look beyond that to Henry Petersen, and beyond that probably to Silbert and Glanzer and to the court reporter and others.

EHRLICHMAN: Two the lawyers in Rockville.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, Dean's lawyers, etc. If you, if--as soon as you let them go that way, then you are admitting the problem. And it seems to me that your only route re--really your only real route is to destroy Dean rather than to--rather than to perserve him perhaps which is what that does.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

ERHLICHMAN: I think it's too soon to know. Obviously this road goes two directions.

PRESIDENT: Yep.

HALDEMAN: And when we see what the, what you have, why then we'll know much more clearly or you'll know what you have.

PRESIDENT: How could you? Let's just take, uh--possibly...

HALDEMAN: Alright.

PRESIDENT: How could you destroy him.

EHRLICHMAN: We call Petersen in and, uh, just, and say, uh, Dean apparently had a conversation with Higby yesterday. Uh, (tape noise) I had a conversation.

EHRLICHMAN: with Dean, whenever the last time it was that you had a conversation with Dean where he asked us to sign those, sign those letters and maybe it was on another occasion. Say, "Henry, I do not have any overt, concrete, uh, satisfactory documentary evidence and that I'm being blackmailed here, but that is the distinct impression that Mr. Dean gives me. I want to tell you that this President is not subject to blackmail, and I want this turned on Dean. I want you to lay a trap for him. I want you to determine whether or not he is attempting to blackmail me, or, uh, indirectly you. And I want the full weight of the law to fall on him if that's what he's up to." Now, you may not, you see, you may not catch him...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...Petersen may not want to, may not want to do it. There may be all kinds of things, but at least, the important thing...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) what do you say about him?

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah, he turned the thing 'round in the opposite direction...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: He's probably bought Henry Petersen already.

PRESIDENT: I, I, (unintelligible). Yet, I think he is on this business of information.

HALDEMAN: What's that? (Unintelligible) Petersen who are allied with the President as a fellow blackmailee. It might (unintelligible):

EHRLICHMAN: All, all I'm suggesting is that, that there is another direction to go and it's stronger I think, than, uh, from the standpoint of the President, than, the immunity thing, which...

PRESIDENT: Well, I can't--I don't know. I guess you're right. You go the immunity route...

HALDEMAN: It's one more cover-up.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. It 's another cover-up. I'm trying to cover-up because--trying to silence Dean. And frankly, if I said something was wrong then I deserve to be impeached.

EHRlichman: Well, look at it this way, if you did, uh, and you try to live it out, that way.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: You talk about you got to get this cloud over and you got to start moving on to, uh, new directions and doing your job. You sure as hell can't do it that way.

PRESIDENT: Well, but face it, basically, if I said some stupid (unintelligible). I'm not--I'm quite candid about it, I mean I (unintelligible) Christian Scientist. No, seriously John, I mean, if I, if, if Dean, if I was most (unintelligible) President. It would be allowed (unintelligible) even my counsel, (unintelligible). Jesus Christ, I thought at least we could talk to our people (unintelligible), Dean and everybody. (Unintelligible) bad him in.

HALDEMAN: Well, see that's the other way to destroy Dean, is not only by Petersen trapping him but by the President--if we had the argument here that the President's got to go out and do something, which is an argument that, that, seems to be strongly made by everyone. That, uh, you can get out and take the following steps. You can talk, that's--the obvious answer is always the President goes out on TV, talks to the people. Well, let's say at some point you have to do that. Okay? You hit them that you're their leader, or you present yourself as their leader, in time of crisis even when it's your own crisis. And that they've gotta understand and share the agony that you've been going through. That

HALDEMAN: you can and must suspend, uh, take the resignation of John Dean. You can't operate the Presidency by threat. You don't say this, but this is what you gotta do. You have to remove the threat in order to do it and you say that that's what you've done. Th-, this is a man who's disserved you.

EHRLICHMAN: The American people-- you gotta go on the assumption that the American people want to believe in their President.

HALDEMAN: I think that's absolutely true. And they want you to say it isn't true, and if--when you say it they're gonna be, they're gonna say I'm glad" he said it. But you're gonna have to hang somewhere (unintelligible). You've got to accept ultimate blame for what happened.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Which moves--removes you from the actual guilt of the, you know, the...

PRESIDENT: Individual act.

HALDEMAN: ...individual act.

PRESIDENT: I already have that.

HALDEMAN: And go through all you've accomplished, you've got to go on accomplishing that. Order Petersen to get this thing brought to Justice, uh, and indicate that some of your closest aides have come under attack, and that uh, uh, you have been informed that they're not guilty, but they are responsible for what's done. And, uh, so, but if anything comes out then--, then they've had it. (Unintelligible) that you can't use a gimmick to cover up which I think our pulling out early maybe does. Maybe you then got to take the offensive in saying as to where this does show there has been something wrong in American politics. This campaign has been subject to the most microscopic scrutiny, the

HALDEMAN: only microscopic scrutiny that any Presidential campaign's ever been subjected to and it doesn't stand up, well you're sad to see, by that, any more than any other campaign would and that doesn't make it good. That makes' it bad. Because bad--you, you're gonna lead a crusade as a, asa, uh, retiring President In changing the American political campaign structure. So I think you've gotta play some, that kind of game somehow.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: 'Cause, there's just too much other stuff coming out. It isn't the Watergate, it's this guy--all this financing shit. And, and., uh, the, uh, appearances of, of problems in that way, and the things that we did. That we admit we did. The Segretti business and the having hecklers at rallies and the, the, uh, you know, all that kind of stuff. I think we gotta say that that--we did it because we had to in self-defense. We don't apologize for it, but looking at it now, now that finally someone's looking at a campaign, it ain't right.

EHRlichman: There's an angle in there too. Th, th--part of this is, is a product of our whole media structure.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And that, uh, uh, campaigns today, uh, didn't just spring full bloom from foreheads of campaign managers. They are the product of the, of the condition (unintelligible) so to speak.

PRESIDENT: Well, of course, finding out without trying to say well, "they did it, we did it," that, uh, uh, (unintelligible-tape noise) for example about the letters, uh, the wires, uh, generated at the Ma--, the May bombing. We generate wires all the time. We try to, uh, consult with the other side just as a common practice it, it's--that, that I think can be (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I, I don't know who was the asshole over there -
- he said we never (unintelligible) somebody in
the Reelection Committee.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Post story. (unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) All that now.

HALDEMAN: You gotta assume that, that's they're turning in
the Colson stuff, that story is the first to
come of all of that coming out, I think because
it's it's, uh,...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Part of that. We're gonna be faced with that.

EHRLICHMAN: They have, uh, apparently, th-the key to that in
my other notes on my talk with O'Brien. O'Brien
gave me the rundown on these various
expenditures and, uh, it would look like they,
they had (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...spent a lot of money.

EHRLICHMAN: ...(Unintelligible) there's a lot of money.

HALDEMAN: They're gonna (unintelligible) out one by one.

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah. And you could make it, you could make a
big story on each one. Bringing the Cubans up
here to, uh, be counter-demonstrators and uh,
all that sort of stuff. (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Some of the stuff I think we can survive.

HALDEMAN: I do too.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) but it'll be a...

HALDEMAN: But it's just all more, more credit.

PRESIDENT: Uh, huh. (Unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: The thing you can't survive is, is Presidential
cupability. And that, I don't think there is.

PRESIDENT: Well, basically--let me put it this way. Uh, you shouldn't survive if the President was culpable out there. But in this instance, uh,...

EHRLICHMAN: But you're not.

PRESIDENT: ...apparently (unintelligible) being forced. (Unintelligible) (tape noise) suggests from unreliable sources and so forth and so on.

HALDEMAN: You didn't know about those.

PRESIDENT: I never saw any.

HALDEMAN: No, sir.

PRESIDENT: It never came to my desk.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: So I know nothing about anything of that sort.

HALDEMAN: There's no way to make that case at all or even imply it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible), as far as afterwards is concerned, the only conversation I remember in the summer even, the only conversation in the summer involving--with John I walked on the beach, and he said, "Eventually the problem with these people--" maybe you had already made the call to Kalmbach, at that point. You didn't talk to him?

EHRLICHMAN: No, I don't believe so. I think it was later that month or the following month. We can't pin it down very closely.

PRESIDENT: But anyway, but you said, "You know, I think the problem of, uh, these defendants is gonna be thing, be bigger than--there are higher-ups in it." Right?

EHRLICHMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: We didn't, we didn't --even then though we didn't, talk about Mitchell being in, did we?

EHRLICHMAN: Didn't know it. I...

PRESIDENT: Or Magruder

EHRLICHMAN: I had... We still don't know it. I still don't know it. But, but, at that time, all I had was a, a lingering suspicion. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until the end of the month, I hope you remember the details of our walk, but you kept saying to me, "Is Colson in this?" And I kept saying, "I don't know." And, and...

HALDEMAN: At that time you thought he was.

EHRLICHMAN: I thought he was.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: And I would be very guarded about this whole thing because I thought Chuck was up to his ass in this thing. That was in July. That was a month after.

PRESIDENT: All right. Then, uh, the (unintelligible) the clemency thing.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: The clemency plan was raised by Chuck with me. But it was handled totally responsibly. That I remember. It was right in this room. This (unintelligible) and he said, "What about clemency for Hunt, because of his wife?" I said, "Chuck, I feel sorry for the fellow," and so forth and so on, that of course would have to be considered, but that's all I said. And I don't think Colson was going to get his tit in a wringer on that one.

HALDEMAN: No. He's very, he's very solid about that. He says that area...

PRESIDENT: That is the only time clemency was ever discussed with him. I--do you recall any others?

EHRLICHMAN: I do not.

PRESIDENT: Then that--there's no discussion of that (unintelligible) with Dean?

HALDEMAN: What about with Mitchell?

PRESIDENT: Mitchell never, never, never raised the subject. I didn't talk to Mitchell about this matter. Do 'you realize that?

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah. That's why...

PRESIDENT: I,...

HALDEMAN: Look at (unintelligible) these press stories put out.

PRESIDENT: I never talked to Mitchell, period.

HALDEMAN: One of the stories now says that, that, uh, "Mitchell visited the President--had to know about what was going on or something because he met daily with John Mitchell." (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: You could get that out...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: I...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) with John Mitchell.

PRESIDENT: Then I never met with him alone. We can all (unintelligible) in those meetings in the Oval Office. That, that frankly is, uh...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: ...is, uh...

HALDEMAN: No, they were talking about back in January, which you were meeting daily with John Mitchell...

PRESIDENT: January?

HALDEMAN: ...setting up the campaign plans. So you had to know about the intelligence plan.

PRESIDENTS: Never, never, never. That was, uh, perhaps you ought to go back over and see him. It might be worthwhile (unintelligible) how often do you think (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't know.

PRESIDENT: How often was it?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) to that period (unintelligible). That's easy to do. It was virtually, you know...

PRESIDENT: I don't remember that. Why I didn't discuss the campaign with Mitchell. I was, I honestly frankly, working on other things.

HALDEMAN: Sure as hell were.

PRESIDENT: I wanted to stay out of that.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) left it to other people. See?

PRESIDENT: So there's that. Then the other thing. You know, the other thing is basically this last conversation with Dean. But, let's take that at it's very worst now. At it's very worst. That has to be played flat out. That at that time I had a grave suspicion of Dean and I had to find out what the story was.

EHRlichman: You were then in about your tenth hour of conversation with him that night or something...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: And, uh, and if you were thinking something was fishy, why can't we get something now? God damn it, somebody's got to tell me what the facts are on this.

PRESIDENT: When did I bring you (unintelligible) you into the matter?

EHRLICHMAN: 30th. A week later.

PRESIDENT: A week later.

EHRLICHMAN: Now, the inter...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) the week, that Dean spent over Camp David with order from you to get the thing written out.

HALDEMAN: Exactly.

EHRLICHMAN: See, he gave you some stuff, you know?

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: He came right out of those meetings with you, and you sent him to Camp David for six days.

PRESIDENT: No. He went to Camp David...

EHRLICHMAN: He was only supposed to take two days.

PRESIDENT: There was a reason, there was a reason he went to Camp David, as I recall, somebody had charged him with...

EHRLICHMAN: That's right. Gray.

HALDEMAN: Pat Gray said he'd lied.

PRESIDENT: Something like that--the television was out.

EHRLICHMAN: That was on (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Told John, "Get up to Camp David to try to..."

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: "...write this damn story out."

HALDEMAN: Exactly.

EHRLICHMAN: And that, that occurred right about the time that you were talking to Dean all through this thing. And that also shook everybody's confidence in Dean a little bit. Uh, the way that whole thing was handled. And so, uh, you sent him up there to put this thing down on paper. At the end of two days, he said he didn't have it done. We were then on the coast as I recall...

PRESIDENT: Well, I didn't see him in that (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: You were out of town. You were out of town all through that...

HALDEMAN: You never saw, you never saw him again. Until, you know, just the recent stuff.

EHRLICHMAN: But anyway, uh, he came down from the mountain...

HALDEMAN: ...and you didn't see him.

EHRLICHMAN: ...on the sixth day and reported that there were no tablets, that he, he didn't write it down.

PRESIDENT: Wait a minute. Where were we then?

EHRLICHMAN: Well, we had come back to town.

PRESIDENT: Were we in Florida?

EHRLICHMAN: We were--San Clemente.

HALDEMAN: But we only stayed a couple days. Remember that was the San Clemente trip you (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, that was February. The San Clemente trip was February.

EHRLICHMAN: Well, this was the last swing to San Clemente. But we came back we came back on the 28th.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) to talk with Dean and (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: No.

EHRLICHMAN: He said something--oh, I'm sorry, that
(unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: We have this. Why don't get it. It's important
I think. Let's get it. I do, uh...Uh, would you
bring book with my calenders over, please.

PRESIDENT: Get the (unintelligible) I want to hear about
that.
(Telephone Hung Up)

PRESIDENT: Did you get it? How do you know how to do it?

HALDEMAN: Uh, I'll bet Steve did it. I don't know how to
do it.'

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). When did I start looking for
Dean? You know.

EHRLICHMAN: Uh, end of February.

HALDEMAN: Beginning of the month of March.
(Unintelligible). About the tenth--from the
tenth to the twenty (tape noise).

PRESIDENT: Yes, right. This is a critical point, you have
less than twelve hours.

EHRLICHMAN: I, I can work back. In fact I can tell you the
days that we knew about (unintelligible) Bittman
with this calendar. Bringing it now. The
reconstruction of your life for a year is, uh,
is, uh, rough adventure...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) goes on.

EHRLICHMAN: (Tape noise) also, catalog month by month, the
issues that you were involved in. The heavy
issues on the domestic side. (Tape noise). What
was really going on here through this time and
why you and I and others just didn't have time
for this.

(Ehrlichman and President conversation--Haldeman on Telephone)

(6-seconds Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Dean...

HALDEMAN: I see, fine.

PRESIDENT: I guess.

HALDEMAN: Will you, uh, get a hold of a guy...

PRESIDENT: I, I've still gotta be sure it was Petersen. I, I directed day after day to him I said, "Now that's your decision, if that's the way (unintelligible)."

HALDEMAN: ...to continue for the period of March 20th to March 23rd.

EHRlichman: Possibility that you okayed...

HALDEMAN: Have him put it in a (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Okay (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Put it in something (unintelligible) bag so it doesn't... Have him bring it to you and also get a, uh, machine that is technically capable of listening to, uh, (tape noise) simple substantive (tape noise).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

(Haldeman Hangs Up Phone)

PRESIDENT: Try to pick the date right away...

HALDEMAN: Yeah, yeah, hold on.

PRESIDENT: ...try to get that out of the-, there.

HALDEMAN: I think that's the morning of the 21st. I think that's the (unintelligible) I think. The meeting that we had that morning. That's the only time I can (unintelligible). She doesn't know when the meeting was with Dean (unintelligible)...

EHRLICHMAN: I can set the time frame from when Bittman--
problem was here.

HALDEMAN: I can figure that out. The 20th or 21st
(unintelligible). Could have been the 20th.

PRESIDENT: Looking, John, at Dean being the problem and so
forth is that there a possibility--how would you
find it?

EHRLICHMAN: Well, uh, I 'd slam him before he could slam
you.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: I understand that, but, but, uh, a word, uh,
it's a question of, uh, what, what goes from
where.

PRESIDENT: I appreciate that.
(Pause)

HALDEMAN: I don't think that's a good...

EHRLICHMAN: John Dean saw the President for...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: ...forty-five minutes on Monday...

PRESIDENT: Monday what?

EHRLICHMAN: Monday the 19th...

HALDEMAN: But that isn't one.

EHRLICHMAN: Sixty minutes on Tuesday the 20th...

HALDEMAN: That isn't it.

PRESIDENT: Oh, yes...

EHRLICHMAN: A hundred and five minutes on Wednesday the 21st...

HALDEMAN: It's more than that. It's a hundred and ten. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) here at the EOB with Mitchell. And then he met later in the day here with you and me.

PRESIDENT: Look, I don't care about all those meetings, you see what I mean. I just want the ones that I alone had with him. I don't...

EHRLICHMAN: And there were a lot of meetings the previous week.

HALDEMAN: We can...

PRESIDENT: I know. You apparently made no notes then, Bob, of your meeting with Dean and me with regard to the Bittman conversation.

HALDEMAN: It's very surprising.

PRESIDENT: But, incidentally, Dean, Dean made no notes either.

HALDEMAN: Is that what he says?

PRESIDENT: He never made notes when he was in my office that I recall. He never made notes, that's why I wondered if he had a recorder. I wonder--I wonder if it's possible he carried a recorder (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: It is possible. But it's highly unlikely.

EHRLICHMAN: Dean went to Camp David the 23rd. He was there on the 28th. We were in town the whole time. You didn't go to San Clemente until the 30th.

PRESIDENT: Well, I was in town that week working on a speech.

EHRLICHMAN: Oh, yeah. And, uh.

PRESIDENT: I called him three or four times while he was up there, at least.

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah, yeah. He was there all by...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) middle of the week. And then it was, it, he came back the 28th. The 29th is (unintelligible). The 30th is when you asked me to take over.

HALDEMAN: You didn't see him..

PRESIDENT: The reason I asked you to take over was he was so easily--what'd I say?

EHRlichman: You said "Dean is up to his ear, ass, ears, elbows, something, in this, and he simply cannot be permitted..

PRESIDENT: It because he had charges of, in his conduct of the FBI and all of this?

EHRlichman: No. You didn't, you didn't even elaborate that one. You just said that, that you had the feeling--you, you brought this right out of right field, This was not a subject we were discussing. You raised it, and you said to me, "Dean is in this so deeply that I just can't have him continue. You're gonna have to get in."

HALDEMAN: It was, it was--I think that one was a combination of factors. There was this problem with the FBI and, uh, uh, the Pat Gray business and your dissatisfaction that we weren't getting anything out of (unintelligible), and Dean was being hammered at that point. I was reporting to you on that (unintelligible) about his own problems. And, uh, he was, we were into at that point, we were into the, the start I think, of the problem of Dean versus Mitchell on whether there was a meeting or not. Uh,...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Pre-planning meeting of the Watergate. I mean the problem--if Dean, if Dean...

PRESIDENT: Well, one thing I did (unintelligible) whether, whether in his testimony did...

HALDEMAN: ...hit the Grand Jury, would...

PRESIDENT: Would they meet with Mitchell?

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Well that was discussed.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Or apparently had been. I, I discussed that...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...but I didn't tell 'em to change a God damn thing.

HALDEMAN: Absolutely.

EHRlichman: And neither did I. All of that night, Dean was sits--looking tome for support on, I can't lie. I kept saying he didn't--"Nobody's saying you should lie." He said, "Mitchell is sayin' I should lie."

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) John Mitchell (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: It may I be you would say there would be--if you re gonna move on that, you gotta be sure, ya know, it's gotta be done.

PRESIDENT: That's what I should have said, but I, ya know, what I mean.

HALDEMAN: No, I think you did.

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: I think you did. I don't think...

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) Dean at that point was talking about--when did he make his, uh, "draw up the wagons around the White House"?

HALDEMAN: In the afternoon of the 21st, after the meeting here as we walked out. And it was, that was when he said it on the steps going down this building, after Dean, Ehrlichman and I had met with you in here late afternoon.

PRESIDENT: That was when we had the Executive Privilege on, uh, meeting on the, uh--Mitchell too?

HALDEMAN: He--no, Mitchell had met with us in here earlier, mid-day.

PRESIDENT: Oh, then Dean, Ehr-, what was that conversation about?

HALDEMAN: It was about the Ervin Committee.

PRESIDENT: Yeah?

HALDEMAN: And then Dean on the way out--I'd probably got into other things. I've got some notes on that. Then uh, then Dean on the way out said, ya know, "I keep thinking we should draw the wagons up around the White House so there's nobody in here who has any problem. The problems are outside. We can draw it up here and hold tight." Well what I meant though is that the only one in here with any problem was him. And that was one route, he was tem-, he was looking routes. Go backwards and you can see. One route he was lookin' at was "give me immunity and let me go to the Grand Jury." Pushed that one hard for a while. Then he was doing the "gather up the wagons around the White House and there's none of us that have any problems, let those guys to go down." And then he went to the, then he, none of those were working. And then he started in on the, on the blackmail route of his attack.

PRESIDENT: He started with the (unintelligible), Bittman.

HALDEMAN: Well, uh--Bittman. Now, that wasn't blackmail at that time. That was the problem he was trying to figure out how to deal with it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...start as blackmail, at that time.

HALDEMAN: I think so. And he, at some point he got into the, using blackmail as a defense theory, but I don't know where that was.

EHRLICHMAN: Y-, y-, let me, uh, read you just two excerpts from my notes that may, (unintelligible)-- February 27, we'll go back. That was about the time that you began to meet first with Dean had any, any length and that--that was 25 minutes on that day. And here are the notes that I took from what you said to me. "I disapprove the Executive Privilege statement. It does not solve the non-appearance situation. Try to state the standard case and review the statement--quote until later. Phone Kleindienst and Dean and tell them to get into the game quickly with regard to the Ervin Committee. Haldeman and Ehrlichman should stay out of this. The President should see Dean at once. Ehrlichman should immediately take over Congressional sales strategy (unintelligible) Domestic Counsel (unintelligible) other problems." Uh, then skipping, to March 20th, the day before your, your probably (unintelligible.). You have a meeting with Bush and I sat in. Bush raised the problem of the Watergate case building, urged that Dean being available to testify before the Ervin Committee. And then you said, "I suggest that the general John Dean statement on the Watergate matter being prepared so Bush can send out along with, with assurances of cooperation. This will also serve to assist Ziegler. This would be the preferred method--write it out, so we gave copies to the Congressional leaders, etc." I mean it appears a dozen times. You are really worried about that (unintelligible).

"Dispose of many of the pending questions, with regard to Chapin, Dean, etc. Deal with the Watergate matter, campaign. Also we should issue a statement by Maury Stans referring to the campaign fund question. Answer the Kalmbach and other issues that have been raised. Dean should in effect prepare a brief on this. Things to be hit in the statement including the fact that the President wants the chips to fall where they may. That there was no White House investigation because the FBI was so thoroughly investigating the other matters. That there was a White House investigation by Dean."

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: "Why not put it down. -The President must insist that the facts not be hidden. Dean should brief the Cabinet on Watergate and answer questions. He could also brief the leaders"

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible tape noise) except was also on the 20th that you told Dean you wanted him to come out on the 21st of February and tell you the whole story." You see, you were sort of getting on top. You were saying, "I want this statement." Then you're saying, "By God, I've gotta know what this is. "Then you--then we, I think said, "You've gotta know because we're, we, we don't. We can't write this. He won't tell us."

PRESIDENT: Well, Dean's story that (unintelligible) "cancer in the heart of the Presidency" speech, as he calls it now. Let me tell you the problem, the problem is--the aftermath of a money was raised, and so forth and so on. The Bittman thing came in. (Unintelligible tape noise) met with Mitchell the next day. I think I come before that.

EHRLICHMAN: It didn't come much before that. It was only kickin' around here a couple of days. I don't know.

PRESIDENT: When did th-, when did he talk to you about Bittman.

EHRLICHMAN: I believe he talked to me on the 20th in the morning.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) talk to you? That could have been (unintelligible). Did I say the 20th?

EHRLICHMAN: Might have been, uh, I don't have any notes...

HALDEMAN: See he wouldn't have to, because it was the Bittman thing and was a direct threat to Ehrlichman. (Unintelligible) done to Ehlichman.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah. My point is though that I...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Your recollection, of any part of the meeting, you were in, why you're gonna get the tape, you'll find out what that--I did not tell Dean to go out and raise the money (unintelligible) John? Bob?

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) The Bush (unintelligible) so to speak...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) is the foundation for your having the long session with Dean the next day.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

EHRlichman: The point is what did...

PRESIDENT: ...whether or not I suggested that, uh, to Dean, well we've got to get the, get the money. I may have said that, I may have said that. And, if I did, what the hell's the defense for that John?

EHRlichman: I don't know. It would depend on how it came out. It may be that, uh, it was, uh, uh, you could, you can say, uh, "I was on an investigation kick. I was (unintelligible) I intended to, I intended to find out how far this guy was in this. I wanted to see what his response would be. Uh, the fact that he didn't uh, respond to me by saying, "Mr. President, I couldn't do a thing like that "(Unintelligible) about this and I probably couldn't have worked any other way.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Yes. The-, the two were, that day, that very day, you must've instructed him to "write this down." Two days later.

PRESIDENT: I probably, more likely to have said, "Look, uh, I think I'm more likely to have said, uh, (unintelligible) this is a Mitchell problems," or something like that. But, uh, it's...

EHRlichman: That's what he was keeping from everybody.

HALDEMAN: The problem you've got if you follow this route now is how do you explain the coddling Dean up to now?

PRESIDENT: Well, the, the, we haven't got the, the, the point is that, uh, Dean--well basically because Petersen has told him, told me to.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Petersen has said, "We're trying to, uh, get Dean to testify and to plea." Uh, therefore, like I said, I've asked him. I said, "Should I ask for his resignation?" He said, "No." Now, that's, I think we've got a pretty good case there. (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Then why didn't you follow his advice and get our resignation?

PRESIDENT: What?

HALDEMAN: Apparently he told you he wanted you to get our resignation.

PRESIDENT: Yes, he did. He did. He and Kleindienst both did. They said, "They ought to resign." And I said, "No," et cetera, et cetera.

HALDEMAN: That's rather incredible, to want us to resign and you to humor him.

PRESIDENT: No, but, you see if...

HALDEMAN: I remember, it was tied to the immunizing him and getting the (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: The context for the whole deal probably was the immunizing. That and getting your resignations.

HALDEMAN: (Tape noises) has some view that if he can come down in our company he comes down better than if he comes down alone.

EHRLICHMAN: Oh, yes. The press is getting more and more immobile, by far. In other words I'm saying that if John Dean will testify to Grand Jury that (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Like what.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) set up a (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

HALDEMAN: Obstruction of justice and that he was just a little fellow who carried it out.

PRESIDENT: Haldeman said that. W-, we're obstructing justice.

HALDEMAN: This morning.

EHRlichman: Yeah. And there was another one last year th-, that, that you and I would be implicated by Dean and his testimony before the Grand Jury. It's quite, quite specific.

PRESIDENT: Is that right? These things move fast. Good thing I'm gonna see Petersen today. Probably it's a good thing I hadn't seen him before. (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: And Dean's evidently come up with some new stuff. Because that was his information to Higby...

PRESIDENT: Awful.

EHRlichman: ...on us. Uh, you remember he said, uh, that he, uh, the President knew some but, but no, not entirely all...

HALDEMAN: ...of what he was going to say.

EHRlichman: ...of what he was going to say. Well, the President knew some of what he was going to say.

HALDEMAN: Whole lot, but not all, of what he was going to say at the Grand Jury. He said, "I'm gonna (unintelligible) and tell the truth."

REEL THREE BEGINS

HALDEMAN: "The President knows most but not all of what I'm going to say.

PRESIDENT: I think for sure, you can be sure before the Grand Jury, they don't ever ask him about a conversation with the President.

REEL TWO ENDS

(Tape noise)

PRESIDENT:

(CONTINUED) I know that. Well, when I say the -- Petersen, says that's privileged I mean, I, nobody questions that.

HALDEMAN: I think, I think, that's that's right. That's -- it has to stay that way until they decide they're making a case against (unintelligible). Well that's one thing, when we go to the people, 'cause they can't make the case against the President. That's the execution (unintelligible with tape noise).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Tape noise). Talk about now.

EHRlichman: No, I tell ya, this is a figment of my imagination this whole, the whole s--no figment but I sat and looked at the wall last night for an hour and tried to think this thing through. And that's where I keep comin' out. And, that's the ultimate. The ultimate, uh, (unintelligible) here.

PRESIDENT: Well let's take it as its worst which an hour or two.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Find out the basis, we were trying to find out what the basis of this was about the Watergate and why the and, why the 21st day is very significant, (unintelligible). I started on my own for the purpose of writing it out.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible with tape noise/**REMOVED**).

PRESIDENT: The obstruction of justice thing could be a real, deal with one other thing.

HALDEMAN: It could.

PRESIDENT: It could be the President was trying to obstruct justice.

HALDEMAN: No, no, no. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) that is, that is, that also is possible.

EHRlichman: And that is a good reason why (unintelligible). On an early process now, that this fellow doesn't know how to handle uh,...

(Noise)

PRESIDENT: Well, to bring us back to subject A. Ah, let me I think we can, we, we've all wrestled with this thing (unintelligible). I think a lot hinges on how we uh, what we do on the Dean problem. Uh, it certainly makes a lot of sense to me, on thing I can talk about is that to have Dean, Haldeman, and Ehrlichman put it in a bag, is wrong (tape noise) not only from an individual standpoint, but it's wrong from the standpoint of what we know. In other words, what culpability -- Dean is culpable without question. Uh, he claims that, you know, his Haldeman and Ehrlichman whoever he may (unintelligible). That's his line with me all the time, with everybody else, I assume. And, uh, Haldeman and Ehrlichman were not--the one point that I didn't need a particularly bull-headed uh, hedging on is a (tape noise) subornation of perjury. On that Haldeman and Ehrlichman were not there. Magruder...

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) Haldeman and Ehrlichman didn't know all the way what Dean wanted.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) what Dean wanted.

PRESIDENT: You didn't discuss with Dean the fact that, look the-- be sure you guys get a good story (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh, no, Jesus, no sir. Absolutely not.

EHRLICHMAN: This whole, this whole story of the warm up meetings and the problems with Dean being in those meetings and, uh, who was there, and all that business came to me the first time in March when we discovered that there was a conflict between Mitchell and Dean which Mitchell began calling Bob about and saying you can't let this guy testify. And really the Ervin thing is what lit that all up. You know...

HALDEMAN: Well then, wel'll (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: And then we got into it and began asking "Well what is the problem, what, what is the conflict?" And then it came out, for the first time, and that's only in the last 45 days, 60 days.

PRESIDENT: Dean, and... (pause) I understood -- I didn't know this before, that Dean and Magruder are supposed to be mortal enemies, now each trying to do the other in.

HALDEMAN: That's not surprising.

EHRLICHMAN: It isn't that. And, uh, Magruder of course in talking to me, held Dean responsible for having contrived the story and, uh...

PRESIDENT: that Dean told him to say. Is that right?

EHRLICHMAN: Constructed the cover story, coached him on how...

PRESIDENT: This is after he had talked to the U. S. Attorney.

HALDEMAN: Yeah

EHRlichman: Yeah-but Magruder told me that before in the meeting I had with Magruder and Mitchell that day.

PRESIDENT: What did he say?

HALDEMAN: He said the same thing. Dean had told him to say. He said Dean can't go out and undercut my story because the reason I gave my story was Dean told me to. I could have easily said there were the two meetings it wouldn't have made any difference to, to my case, but Dean told me not to because they wanted to keep Dean's name out of it. Mitchell was present when that happened and Mitchell admits he was present when that happened. (Unintelligible with tape noise) meeting in Becker's office. In other words O.K. all detailed (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, Dean has certainly--well, Magruder has told that story.

HALDEMAN: That if you recall (unintelligible) that I was worried about at the time we were talking about going up to testify and all that saying I have information that I don't have to testify to, I don't know if it's true but I know what was told.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: But, if it is hearsay, in that sense, then it's hearsay (unintelligible with tape noise) testify to that because of being put in a position of incriminating Mitchell. Why do you think I was incriminating...

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah, I (unintelligible) Bittman thing.

PRESIDENT: I don't know (unintelligible). You remember my saying to Dean well look, for Christ sakes takes care of him. Be sure the son-of-a-bitch doesn't talk.

EHRLICHMAN: I think actually, you've got a good point here, on this suborning of perjury thing's a pretty good example of the, of the kind, of, of ignorance we were living in over here with regard to what Dean was doing. Now, it's also true, over in the money department, in the pay-off of the defendants, the hush-up money.

PRESIDENT: How's that?

EHRLICHMAN: ...that we were, we were basically in the dark as to what Dean was doing, except when he would come to us on a specific, specific instance as he did when he needed us to get Kalmbach. I, I have a hunch that if we hadn't had to lock on Kalmbach the way we did, he'd of just short circuited us out and, gone direct to Kalmbach and, and done it that way, but he discovered that Kalmbach would not take orders from him.

PRESIDENT: But he, but he, Dean, wanted the money for hush, here again.

HALDEMAN: I don't know that.

EHRLICHMAN: Ah, at that time which was in July and August...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Mitchell.

EHRLICHMAN: ...I think not. I think they had monumental attorneys' problems and that they were legitimately concerned about how to hire counsel for these guys and that...

HALDEMAN: ...then now to retain them. For example, after they got counsel, counsel was walking on.

PRESIDENT: See, they, they got very high-powered guys like F. Lee Bailey's office, and, and others. And they must have had big money problems.

HALDEMAN: Well, we know that. Some lawyer -- it was one of their the suits, Hunt's lawyer, somebody, ran into our attorney on the street, I mean our attorney on the street and said the son-of-a-bitch still owes me \$100,000 or something.

PRESIDENT: Hunt does?

HALDEMAN: Yeah (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: He'd been promised, he'd been promised cash payment in full, and, and received. twenty-five hundred dollars. So, uh, I think at the time Herb got into this, that...

PRESIDENT: It was in your view, it was your concern, it was attorney's fees, perhaps it's the same...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...time, you gave the three-fifty, ordered the three-fifty.

EHRlichman: Well, he's getting that, he's getting more compelling of three-fifty, because it certainly can be, I think, successfully argued that there was no motive at all after being in the White House, (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: ...after the hush, I couldn't care less what happened if they got burned, I didn't know, I didn't know what was going on there, or who was where, in fact...

(ALL TALK AT ONCE)

PRESIDENT: ...(unintelligible) one story kicking around, that was forty, forty was the election and some afterwards. Is that correct or not?

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) cause I don't know. I'm told that it was all after the elections but that there were two chunks, that there were a chunk of 40 and then another chunk. You see they put (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT:

RESTRICTED-"D"

Magruder did. (Tape noise) tell Strachan (unintelligible). Magruder. They believe Magruder and they don't believe Strachan. I said, "Well, what the hell is it about?" I said well, I said, "At what point?" Well, it's about Strachan's having furnished uh, the budget and tape." No--not that about, Magruder had furnished it to Strachan. I said, "Well, what about Haldeman?" Well on that the lie detector, well it, wasn't as clear on that, so I gotta little something outta that.

EHRLICHMAN: So that's the question whether Magruder had sent a budget over here, that said they were (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: That fact, and two questions: one whether Magruder sent it, whether Strachan and what Strachan--

RESTRICTED-"D"

EHRLICHMAN: Well, they can't ah, I mean they're gonna prove it at some point. They can't get by on just Magruder because Magruder's gonna be a convicted perjurer by that time. So, uh, Strachan's uh -- and the lie detector probably isn't admissible.

PRESIDENT: Oh, he claimed that, that (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible). So, they still gotta make a case on Strachan.

HALDEMAN: That's amazing that they'd use that. I, I thought they didn't use lie detectors.

PRESIDENT: Well, they do it sometimes and he said we just came to the point where there's a question of who is lying and they didn't force him. (Unintelligible) said, "Sure,". (Unintelligible) said, Sure. I think Strachan is the more likely to be telling the truth than Magruder, I think Magruder basically is a classical liar...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...Magruder can pass any lie detector test and Strachan will be -- figure God damn that's a sensitive (unintelligible) jiggle up and down that's another reason the lie detector goes down.

HALDEMAN: You see Strachan could be at -- in telling the truth, thinking that's gonna be, this is gonna be harmful (unintelligible) jiggle (unintelligible) but -- I listened to 'em both and...

PRESIDENT: Did you talk to Strachan?

EHRLICHMAN: Yes sir. I talked with both on the subject, and I think Strachan's more believable on the explanation which is "If I had ever seen anything like that, I'm sure I would have remembered it." And that's a -- you know I mean he's very categorically (unintelligible) same time, uh, have a, just may have some recollection of having seen it, you know. And I, I wouldn't be in a position to know. But I had to, I had to, decide in my own mind who was telling the truth on that and I came down on (unintelligible) conflict (unintelligible) Bittman business...

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) you mean there. I, uh, we were informed that, uh, that the attorney fees had been taken care of. Here...

HALDEMAN: Good

PRESIDENT: I was present.

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: When -- at any time did Dean ever tell me that?

HALDEMAN: I, I don't know. It's possible that, that came up in a meeting here that afternoon.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I don't recall it at all -- but it pushed the question, I, I would say that's possible. But, uh...

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) does ring a little bell. (Unintelligible). Was I, was I here?

HALDEMAN: Yes.

EHRlichman: I yeah and somebody said Mitchell says that's all taken care of.

PRESIDENT: That would still be consistent with the President trying to get at the God damn thing.

EHRlichman: (Tape noise) right, right.

PRESIDENT: Or is it?

EHRlichman: Yeah, I don't (unintelligible),

HALDEMAN: I can't say that happened. I'll check on it (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: What would you fellows answer for example if, uh, they ask you a question whether or not, uh, about -- and Dean testifies, that there was a discussion of uh, Bittman had to get paid off.

EHRlichman: Hey, before you make trouble on that, let's let's see what tapes do...

PRESIDENT: Well, what the tapes say -- but I mean apart from the tapes, there's another conversation. I was not present at. What the hell do you say (tape noise) Mitchell would deny.

EHRlichman: For those three weeks I didn't really understand what the President was up to. See, the first thing he did he took me off Ervin -- I'm speaking now -- took me off the Ervin matter, said Dean's gonna handle this. And then he did a very unusual thing, he began seeing a lot of Dean which he didn't usually do, and I didn't know what was up, I didn't know what they were talking about, I couldn't get a hint, however, anything the President was saying to me about what he was up to with Dean I just knew he had gotten into this because he'd been pushing for a statement and couldn't get one. The next thing I knew he'd sent Dean up to Camp David and then on the 30th he announced to me that Dean was in this thing so deep that he had to take him out. So it was obvious then, in the hindsight that the President had been up to something this whole time. Now I can think back and think of bits and pieces and I can see he was playing a, a poker game...

PRESIDENT: Well what about the questions or charges Dean had made that, uh, Mitchell indicated at that time (unintelligible) taken care of. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**).

EHRLICHMAN: Well, I'd just say you, you were being pretty inscrutable with Dean all through that period of time.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) you had something (unintelligible) and on the 30th, I discovered where it was.

HALDEMAN: Now you might be interested in this, the phone conversation that, uh, John Dean called me or I called him, on March 26th which was while he was up on the mountain and we had obviously discussed (unintelligible) the question was raised that John -- that we ought to make an offer for John Dean to go to the Grand Jury. And he said check with Dean and see if he has any problems and if we, if we do, do that. (Tape noise) Dean said there would be no problem. Then he, wanted to tell me about some of the things he had been working --brought me up to date -- he had just talked with Jeb Magruder about the (unintelligible) business, all that. Then he, then he obviously goes got into his notes, his notes that he was working on and reconstructing the situation 'cause he says, "The main problem area that we're faced with is the blackmail situation. "I was aware," this is Dean talking, "I was aware that Mitchell and others were being black-mailed by those involved and I sought to ignore it, so I am vague on the specifics. First time I was aware of it was when Mitchell told me that the defendants wanted help regarding money for bond. This was relayed from Mrs. Hunt to Bittman, to Parkinson, to Mitchell and LaRue, and they, the defendants were threatening to cause general havoc if they were not helped. Parkinson said he did not want to be involved further in this so Bittman used O'Brien. O'Brien is unhappy with his role

HALDEMAN:

(CONTINUED) in this, too. O'Brien reported the threats to Mitchell and LaRue and Dean, and Dean passed on some of it to some people in the White House." (Tape noise). Mitchell had to...

PRESIDENT: Yeah, now that would mean...

HALDEMAN: Here are the specifics on it. "After Mitchell had the original draft, he told Dean to tell Haldeman and Ehrlichman that we needed to use Kalmbach money to raise, use Kalmbach to raise money, and he should get Haldeman and Ehrlichman to authorize this. Kalmbach raised the money and delivered it per instructions to, per instructions to LaRue, about \$70,000. The next time there was a threat to the Committee, there was no money available. Stans and LaRue were aware that the 350,000 to the White House for polling. The White House had not met, had not spent this money and wanted me to return it. Only Strachan with Haldeman approval could spend the money. There was one problem, about 22 thousand of it had already been spent, and I don't know the purpose." This is Dean. The problem was how to return the funds without a big deal in the press. So the funds just sat in Strachan's safe. Mitchell asked Dean to ask Haldeman for some of this money, assured that it could be replenished. Dean called Haldeman and said there was a bad situation here growing worse. LaRue or O'Brien said it was a crisis. Haldeman said to have Strachan get the money but to clear it as soon as possible. Haldeman said to get all the money out of here and get a receipt for it. Strachan did get the money out but got no receipt. I am

HALDEMAN:

(CONTINUED)

not aware of the extent of the threats to the Committee." Those were two examples. He was not aware how far threats to the Committee went "but there were two blackmail threats to the White House. One, Mrs. Hunt, to Colson's secretary, made a veiled threat and Colson didn't know what it was about, and referred it to Dean. Dean advised Colson to take no more calls from Mrs. Hunt and reported the incident to O'Brien. The second was when O'Brien told Dean that Hunt insisted on a meeting that he send a message to Dean regarding a need for 72 plus 50 and that if it was not received, he would reconsider his options and disclose the seamy things he did for Ehrlichman and Krogh. Dean advised Haldeman and Ehrlichman of this threat. Ehrlichman requested that Dean discuss this with Mitchell and Colson. Dean discussed it with Mitchell, but not Colson. Mitchell said in a later meeting it was no problem." There are Dean's notes. "(Tape noise) not in a position to fully evaluate the situation on blackmail. That all concerned made the point of dire threats to the White House and when people are being blackmailed they imagine the worst." That's all of this on blackmail. Now, he says, "Regarding clemency, O'Brien told Dean that, that Bittman was asked by Hunt to meet with Colson. Ehrlichman said Colson should meet with Bittman and he did. Colson said it was essential that Hunt be given assurance..."

PRESIDENT:

Colson said.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. "...and Ehrlichman agreed. Colson told Bittman that he could make no committment, but as a friend he would assist. He referred to Christmas as the time when clemency actions were usually taken, and Hunt was satisfied with this."

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I'm trying to say that Ehrlichman, uh, (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Well, I recall Dean -- I had two meetings, Dean, Colson, and me, in which this problem was discussed and it was decided -- I, I had urged that Colson talk with Bittman...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: ...because Hunt was obviously very distraught, very distraught, and that Colson not talk with Hunt...

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: ...and that Colson be extremely circumspect about what he said to Bittman and we discussed clemency and Colson's recollection and mine, both are that I was very categorical in saying you cannot in any way infer the possibility of clemency. Now this was late in the game. This was in January or February so there was already a lot of talk in the papers about hush money and I was very concerned that any inference could be raised in this meeting, that would in any way come back to you. That's the reason for stressing it, as I did. Colson had, had to meet with Bittman says he'd reduced the, the meeting to memoranda which I've never seen, but he said, -- he says that he did not in any way induce Hunt's uh, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: What if Colson were asked if he ever discussed it with the President?

EHRlichman: He tells me he did not.

PRESIDENT: (Tape noise) discussed, I guess.

HALDEMAN: That's what he -- remember you had me check with him when we were down Key Biscayne, for a few hours that, that afternoon.

EHRlichman: If I'm ever asked, I will say that I told Colson flatly, never to discuss it with the President.

PRESIDENT: Correct. Colson, Colson did discuss it but it, but it was -- I must say that conversation I'm not afraid of because anybody would have a right to say -- he didn't say I have to, this or that or the other thing. He said that, uh, Hunt's in a hell of a shape...

HALDEMAN: Colson has every intention (unintelligible) it's to his overriding interest to do so. To say that any conversation he ever had with the President on any subject, he will not discuss with anyone.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's right. Well, I, guess I don't want it to appear, though that he's covering up for somebody now.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but he'll say that on a consistent basis, so if it isn't -- in relation to this or anything else, it's, it's, uh, policy...

PRESIDENT: He should also -- I (unintelligible) could say, I could say this is the subject you never -- I don't want to say discuss any conversation I (unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: Except that Chuck was in bad frame of mind, for Hunt at this time.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) over the whole thing and, uh, Colson was making a case for his going and talking to Hunt, for seeing and, uh, and he really had on his mind he might do that.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I have to look at Hunt now. Hunt now realizes that no clemency's hangin' out there, he sure knows that, doesn't he. Huh?

HALDEMAN: Well...

PRESIDENT: Must be getting the uh, (unintelligible) going around here now. (Tape noise) Hunt might at this time. Who else would take care of for example, nobody's gonna take of Hunt's kids now.

EHRLICHMAN: Well, he doesn't need it now. See he got awful lot of money. His wife was heavily insured. So it may not have to save...

PRESIDENT: Maybe not Hunt. What about Bittman, what's he gonna say?

EHRLICHMAN:

RESTRICTED-"D"

(unintelligible). Colson gave the proposition.

PRESIDENT: When you get Bittman, (unintelligible), I suppose.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. I would guess so. I would
(Unintelligible with tape noise)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). Bittman would say that Colson said he had talked to the President and the President promised Hunt (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible with tape noise) to me he's, he's well prepared to handle that.

PRESIDENT: I think we have a strong witness there, hopefully. It seems to me (unintelligible with tape noise).

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible). I had a meeting with Dean, Dean and Kleindienst and, uh, 45 days after the burglary...

HALDEMAN: (Tape Noise) tremendous amount of information (unintelligible with tape noise).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible with Tape Noise/**REMOVED**) go to my office, nobody bothers me there.
(Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: What's out there?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) have a problem?

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: I said (unintelligible) maybe we don't have a problem.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). Assuming the problem as bad as I set out. Let's face it though, we're looking at the problem in terms of saying look, sure God damn it, you got, get (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You can ride that out.

PRESIDENT: Well, the point is, that, uh, John's the, guy, who's gotta make up the (unintelligible) defense on that. We gotta say that ah, that was the President trying to find out what the hell this is about.

EHRlichman: Well, I think the record is very good, on that we are...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Very good.

PRESIDENT: Meaning what?

EHRlichman: Meaning that you're suspicious, of those facts on the time we reported to you on the fruitlessness of the La Costa meeting back in February, and then you began to do a whole bunch of things you've never done before.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: You got fed up with the inability of each of us, to move from one to the other, not get a story out, to get it done. You hit me, and you hit John and then you hit both of us and then ya, you tell us to hit Dean, and you push around this way, and then you finally haul Dean and Moore in and, and hit them. You hit MacGregor way (unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: Clear back to last summer. And that date is backed up by something that you told me, I don't think you saw at the start, but MacGregor and I got put crosswise at the start a bit. Well what lies behind that I discovered at getting back into my notes. I knew that I had urged a statement to be put out...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...(Unintelligible) at the time we went to Hawaii. When we were in Hawaii...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) 'cause you liked it, cause I have notes saying I think we oughta follow the Ehrlichman plan. It's, it's a good idea.

EHRLICHMAN: The interesting thing is, it came from something that the President said about three and a half weeks before that, about how you would like to get a statement out around that period of time one at the White House and one at the Committee. So that's, that's what planted the seed and then it germinated and (unintelligible) now. MacGregor's forget is a little bit convenient. I had it on tape in a phone conversation of us about seven or eight several days ago in which he remembers a lot of these things and he forgets (unintelligible). But, uh, that's neither here or there but the fact is, that, even back there in the (unintelligible) conversation (unintelligible) July or August you were pushing, as you have been through this whole course of things to get statements out, that explaining to people and over and over again you hear let the chips fall where they may. Let's get it out.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: So I think, I think on the record you're, you're quick to chip...

PRESIDENT: I can't be blackmailed. (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: I mean hell I deserve (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: It's almost, you're settin yourself up for it, because too many people know. You can't ride that, you can't be sure you can ride that one out.

EHRLICHMAN:

RESTRICTED-"b"

HALDEMAN:

PRESIDENT: Let me, let's sort of, probably thrash it out here, pretty much as to where it is. The way I look at the thing incidentally, I think we, we can, we could consider the leave of absence thing. Could consider it, the possibility on the ground that, that, uh, the basic reason (unintelligible) because of the charges for this or that and the necessity (unintelligible). It would be coupled with a statement from the attorney, that I'm thinking now that because of the charges, two or three options here statement by the attorney that I have (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) whether you have to go to the Grand Jury so forth and so on and you need time to prepare, you know, prepare for that and so forth. (Unintelligible) essential business of the government go forward (unintelligible) these charges uh, going, uh, and so forth. We feel it's imperative that until, until the, they're cleared these charges in other words (unintelligible) cleared that you feel that, uh, you're, uh, you're, uh, continuing in your duties, uh, but that you, that your ability, the faculty to your carry on your duties will be seriously impaired. (Unintelligible/**REMOVED**) poses a problem of, uh...

HALDEMAN: Poses a hell of problem. When do you decide it's over?

PRESIDENT: When do you decide it's over.

HALDEMAN: But if he keeps the option open.

PRESIDENT: At, at least the point is to buy a little time and to leave the option open. When you see what builds, then you're able to see what Dean does say, you understand,

HALDEMAN: That' s right.

PRESIDENT: You're able to see what, uh, what other crap does come out right and then I would say until the Grand Jury acts, I'm not gonna judge this case- I'm not gonna judge it, I'm not gonna judge, anybody in it. I have to (unintelligible/**REMOVED**), have to, have to include all three at this point.

HALDEMAN: Let me, let me argue a different approach. See-- set of circumstances.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)
(Pause)

EHRLICHPMAN: Well, I don't know. I regard, argue freely that you've get three different kinds of situations here.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: One you got Dean, whom I bet Petersen will tell you is gonna be indicted. Uh,...

PRESIDENT: Either that or he gets immunity.

EHLRICHMAN: ...Well, what even there he can't be given immunity for, uh, uh, suborning perjury. That doesn't reach us. Ah, he's gonna have to take a fall on that by himself and I think (unintelligible). I don't know what Petersen will tell you, but I suspect he'll tell you (unintelligible) gonna be indicted some basis and he'll get case immunity on things where he implicates other people. But that's something to ask Petersen about, but let's assume...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: ...(Unintelligible) indicted, then I think you can, you could, you could say, "I've been advised by the Assistant Attorney General that, uh, John Dean is uh, (tape noise) uh, U.S. Attorney has indicated, uh, especially with, Haldeman (unintelligible)." There's class of cases where people in the White House have been, uh, uh, openly and notoriously charged with, uh, implications, uh, I answered that determination by, uh, uh, people in the in the judicial process, I'm not gonna prejudge that situation, but I am gonna insist that people in that situation take a leave of absence at least, uh, and so that's the second - until it's cleared up or firmed up by act of the Grand Jury. So that's the second classic case. Then, there's a, there's a third group of people in the White House who have not I been publicly charged with anything. But from my investigation, my understanding of this facts, have some direct or indirect involvement into the subject matter of the case. Uh, I know who they are. They know who they are, and my decision on them is to have them in place for the time being. With the expectation that in the course and development of the prosecution in this case, they, they a firm body of facts will become available to me on which I can make a decision. Now that's the end of it, that's the end of that. Generalized, it's a generalized kind of thing. We made a list this morning to try and see who were in the same boat as I am personally, in this. That is not charged with anything, with no evidence before the Grand Jury yet, with an incipient problem and there are 17 of us. In the same identical situation.

PRESIDENT: Really?

HALDEMAN: That's principals. I mean you're not looking at secretaries or (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Like who? You know.

HALDEMAN: You put me in the second category.
(Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT:

HALDEMAN:

PRESIDENT:

HALDEMAN:

RESTRICTED-"D"

PRESIDENT:

HALDEMAN:

PRESIDENT:

HALDEMAN:

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...uh, uh, output and I think, I think does have some involvement.

HALDEMAN: in the convention problems which
(CONT'D) this focused around at that time
RESTRICTED-"D" and

RESTRICTED-"D"

PRESIDENT: Meeting about what? The, uh,...

HALDEMAN: (Tape Noise) How to deal with, uh, with, uh, the
Watergate problem uh, various points of time.

PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

HALDEMAN: And, uh, (tape noise). **RESTRICTED-"D"**
I would say is more direct. Then you get the
whole problem with the press office. Ziegler?
He was publicly accused of lying...

EHRlichman: ...and who has handled a lot of private
transactions with Dean. (Unintelligible) with
Dean and me in an effort to get Ziegler's
position

PRESIDENT: Yeah

EHRlichman: ...and is probably charged with by Dean with
notice of some of the things that I am charged
with.

HALDEMAN: Gerry Warren falls under the same problem as
Ziegler.

PRESIDENT: Like for example Ziegler...

EHRlichman: Well, uh, I got in the calendar, half a dozen
meetings with Dean, Ehrlichman and Ziegler. It
would be the kind of situation where, uh, McCord
letter is about to come out and Dean would have
had inside information as to what it was. And
so we would sit down and talk about the press
handling this. The Segretti matter, Ziegler had
all kind of inside information on Segretti which
Dean got from his investigation.

PRESIDENT: Right, right, right.

HALDEMAN: Gerry Warren sort of falls into the same thing. Ken Clawson is in there -- both in that area and in the Colson area during the campaign where he was

RESTRICTED-"D"

PRESIDENT: You're, you're now mixed, you're not including not only Watergate,...

HALDEMAN: Including...

PRESIDENT: ...Segretti.

HALDEMAN: ...No, this isn't Segretti type stuff, this is, is...

PRESIDENT: All Watergate?

HALDEMAN: No, it's not Watergate either.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) to rough-up the demonstrators.

PRESIDENT: Campaign activities. I got that.

HALDEMAN: Right, right.

PRESIDENT: Ervin Committee.

HALDEMAN: Ervin Committee at least, but it's coming out now so it's gonna be press before Ervin Committee.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And probably, will get in some way logged into the Grand Jury business because of the money.

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

EHRLICHMAN: Well, now if, if the premise is that someone is going to be a problem to the functioning of the Presidency...

PRESIDENT: Right. (Unintelligible) a hell of a lot.

EHRLICHMAN: Then, you got to, there isn't any good place to stop without going all the way because if we're off the scene and we both take up farming in Iowa...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: **RESTRICTED-"D"** some day becomes just as big a problem to you as I might be, if I were here. Because they haven't got me to focus on.

HALDEMAN: If they can't tell you who's (unintelligible) proposition (unintelligible) the President.

EHRLICHMAN: Well, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: I think rather than to be specific about an individual or individuals, you really have to par it off for yourself as kind of a generic classification, and decide what you're going to do about those people. You can do one of two things. You can say I've checked this and it now goes down with (unintelligible) and so they're all gone tomorrow morning. Or you can say there're shade and gradations on this thing but judicial process is underway. And I'm going, I'm going to let the remedy fit the crime, so to speak.

HALDEMAN: Then what you have to do is as soon as (unintelligible/**REMOVED**) Higby, he goes. (Unintelligible) I don't think very many of will probably be targets. But in the press, the witness is a target.

PRESIDENT: True. (Tape Noise) Come down to their level.

EHRLICHMAN: Well, I come down to treating Dean differently than Bob, Bob was different than me. And that's a self-serving kind of a suggestion, but it, it keeps coming back to me that this (unintelligible) treatment of Haldeman and Ehrlichman that you're not really taking in account the different press posture in which we find ourselves at the moment.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I agree.

EHRLICHMAN: I stand at, at the moment, with all kinds of press calling my office saying, "Gee, why does he even have a lawyer?" And...

PRESIDENT: Problem is with your having the same lawyer, (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: ...that's the problem and then we're past that, we'll be taking a chance on that...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and so on and, uh, uh, eventually we'll probably have to make another (unintelligible). But we--if that was a mistake it was a mistake (unintelligible) but as far as the perception of the press of my situation now, they don't know really, that Dean has anything and as a matter of fact, that apparently the leaks out of, out of the, uh, prosecutor's office had down played my involvement. Now maybe that's the lull me or to trap me or something, but...

PRESIDENT: Well I'll have to examine Petersen on that.

EHRLICHMAN: That's, that's right and, uh, you would have to be satisfied on that. Uh, I'm stuck with this dilemma: if I, if, if Bob and I both take a leave, Monday, Tuesday

EHRLICHMAN: morning I gotta start answering questions.
(CONT'D) What do I say? Well you see there's this fellow and he says this and this about me and this is true...

PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this then. You're not -- you suggest nobody take a leave then.

EHRLICHMAN: No, I don't. I, I suggest you fire Dean and that Bob take a leave and that I be prepared to, I be prepared to take a leave...

PRESIDENT: You?

EHRLICHMAN: ...the minute the charges surface.

PRESIDENT: Well, why do you have Bob take a leave, because of this, uh,...

EHRLICHMAN: 'Cause he's already pretty well (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Named...

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) so on and so forth.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. And in your case

EHRLICHMAN: This hasn't come out.

PRESIDENT: That's true.

HALDEMAN: Now, you've got no basis for, for...

EHRLICHMAN: I know but...

HALDEMAN: John had no basis for taking any action.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Particularly with John.

HALDEMAN: No apparent basis, uh.

EHRLICHMAN: But that doesn't gain me a whole lot except, that it divides me, PR wise, and to me that's some little advantage to be divided from Dean...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and to be divided a little bit from Bob in the sense that I don't, I don't share this 350 transaction with him. And therefore...

PRESIDENT: Also you, you don't share the 350 transaction, you also don't share even the question about did you see any of the tape...

EHRLICHMAN: That's, that's correct.

PRESIDENT: ...which, of course (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That's right.

EHRLICHMAN: That's correct.

PRESIDENT: There's...

HALDEMAN: The charges, the official charges against us are different.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). On the other hand, Dean business, of your approving the bond, and the cover-up and all that sort of thing.

EHRLICHMAN: And then the minute that surfaces...

HALDEMAN: We're, we're joined on that, yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: ...and then if that surfaces, that I oughta bail out of here.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: If that's the pattern we decide...

PRESIDENT: ...but, but on a leave basis.

EHRlichman: Yeah, and that would be my, that would be my thought, I have a, I have a real practical problem with, with a resignation, which shouldn't really weigh in your consideration.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: That's exactly it. (Unintelligible). Well, it is a factor only in this sense, that I then have to get a job, I have to go to work, (unintelligible) practicing law, I can. I mean that is not the problem. I can, I know that immediately where I go relatively good paying thing job. You wouldn't be terribly happy with it, but I would be terribly happy with it, but I would be in a kinda any port in the storm situation at that point. You're with me on that?

ALL: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Uh, uh, to say again I wouldn't wanna to be.

PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this, to be quite candid. Is there any way you can use cash?

EHRlichman: I don't think so.

HALDEMAN: I don't think so.

PRESIDENT: As I said, there're a few, not much (unintelligible) as much I think as 200 there's available in '74 campaign n already.

HALDEMAN: That compounds the problem. That really does.

PRESIDENT: That's what I think. Okay. I'd just like you to know that.

EHRlichman: Everybody...

PRESIDENT: Well, I got another thing...
(Pause)
Well, I think, well...

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) disadvantage and none of the advantages of, of saying he is a gentlemen. I mean that it, it decidedly links us, in a way that I don't think you can afford. Ah, the lead thing is sufficiently ambiguous, I think that, that you avoid some of the problem of (unintelligible) direct relationship.

HALDEMAN: Uh, no as I say...

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: The more I think of the resignation thing, in light of this, uh, well it's the option (unintelligible)--oh, and the other thing (unintelligible) Ziegler's on (unintelligible) this morning I think (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: Tom hasn't been there much...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. And, uh, (tape noise) the difficulty with the resignation thing is just that it condemns you. Nothing could clean up the problem. The idea, as I told your lawyer (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: The continuing analogy of gangrene in the leg and then sure (unintelligible) cutting off both arms (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well my point about the resignation, (unintelligible with tape noise) there are some advantages you have to bear in mind that the main advantage being that then I can say, by golly, they're gonna go over this people, put, push Haldeman (unintelligible) John, Ken Cole

PRESIDENT: and yours, Len Garment with Dean's (tape
(CONT'D) noise) but with regard to your other 17 may I
say, I think -- well that's good you put down
those names. I, I simply not going to, uh, go
up and down and do like George Bush here with
this fellow, what's his name here --
(unintelligible) anybody involved
(unintelligible).

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) working over here anybody over
here and say we're going fire somebody. Jesus
Christ, Clawson people who've worked in Colson's
office, the money thing -- so they've got
involved in the money, throw out, do you throw
out people that, who were just, uh, carrying on,
uh, do you throw out somebody (unintelligible)
demonstrate. Do you throw out

Beginning of Reel 4

Ziegler because he's saying the press office
isn't getting briefed on this thing.

HALDEMAN: I don't think that's your problem with Ziegler. I think your problem with Ziegler is that he's lied.

END OF REEL 3

PRESIDENT: He was lying?

HALDEMAN: Sure. See, they're putting it on this whole, on this Watergate thing. That he's now declared the earlier statements inoperative now.

EHRlichman: I don't think Ron has never knowingly lied..

PRESIDENT: Never, never.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: No never.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: No, Ziegler's (unintelligible) is going to be and have to be very straight arrow and I, I was briefed and I asked him, I said, Ron, did every statement you make (unintelligible) Dean report. (Tape Noise,) You're forever making mistakes (unintelligible) best knowledge that I could get at that time. And I think he'll...

HALDEMAN: See, that's why he better stay almost --cover anybody, you've got to cover everybody with the basic truth, which is, that, uhh, the, the gangrene here was Dean. The problem we had is none of us really knew what was happening. I'm sure if we did have some peripheral knowledge of some things, he did report, he did tell a lie. He (unintelligible). I don't, I don't (unintelligible). They wondered what he was up to.

PRESIDENT: Hope not.

EHRLICHMAN: I think that's true. I think he did.

HALDEMAN: I don't think that, I think Dean was playing his own game. I don't think he'd tell us who knew.

PRESIDENT: Dean was playing a game with Mitchell for a while, but at that point I think he went and told everyone that Mitchell was trying to play the game there...

HALDEMAN: And, I think if he ever...

PRESIDENT: ...and, remember you all told, you all told me Dean's carried a very heavy load and I remember one of my early conversations with him that you've carried a helluva, helluva heavy load and I appreciate what you've done. I've told him that.

HALDEMAN: I was saying that same thing to him in mid-March...

PRESIDENT: Correct.

HALDEMAN: ...right up til the end of March.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRLICHMAN: Christ sakes, you poor guy, you're doing great.

HALDEMAN: And I think at the outset he was doing it. Took all the right moves; and, and, raking mostly the right acts, but it, it, it compounded itself.

EHRLICHMAN: (Tape Noises) (Unintelligible) at least has to give you some feel of the man. (Tape Noises)

PRESIDENT: Certainly, we don't have to do it this week.

EHRLICHMAN: I, I would say this, that, that, uhh, you wouldn't want to do either of us before you do Dean.

PRESIDENT: Oh, I know.

EHRLICHMAN: But, uh, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) what the conversation
(unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: That's correct. I can't answer your question.
I just don't know. (Tape Noise) Everybody's,
uh, I, I, I don't know what the current thinking
is cause I haven't talked to a lot of people
around here, but last week everybody was saying,
well, you know, we oughta move within 48 hours
or it's going to be (unintelligible). Uhh, I
don't sense that, I, uhh...

PRESIDENT: Huh, I made one last week too.

EHRLICHMAN: You made one last week-end and, uh, everybody
knows very well where you are. And, and from
the way the Post and others are kind of treading
water at the moment, nothing much is happening.

HALDEMAN: Nobody's demanding the President do anything
more now. What they're demanding now is getting
the facts out.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Everybody who's guilty should leave,
that's what they're saying. Ah, not the guilty..

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) his involvement.

PRESIDENT: ...it isn't the basic, guilty from the law, they
are, they all separate that. They said the
President's top -- and they're really not
talking about the (unintelligible) that are the
President's top men must be free of any (Tape
Noise). Let me say on a separate category that
I, I wouldn't (unintelligible). I know you'd
(unintelligible). A press secretary has got to
do that. I, I just, don't you agree, Bob?

HALDEMAN: Well, yeah, I think you have, you have the forecast now, that when we're gone, that he's, that he's next.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: And...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...it'll be, the, the onslaught will be...

EHRlichMAN: I think it will be more so because he's much more out front on --

HALDEMAN: And more effective. You see, they've logged him over the past week-end as being your acting chief of staff anyway.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: That you're carr-... that he's carrying on the, the duties that I normally would (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah. (Tape Noise) look very good (unintelligible) I had to do, I had to, had to talk to somebody (unintelligible). I had a big problem here, I don't have anyone I could--

EHRlichMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I could talk to you two, of course, but, uh, I had some problems that, uh, I mean in terms of, uh, like (unintelligible) in Florida or Camp David or (unintelligible), of course (unintelligible), let's face it.

UNIDENTIFIED: Correct.

PRESIDENT: But then...

EHRlichMAN: It's the right decision (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRLICHMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: ...prepare you for the execution,

HALDEMAN: Like when we worked down there they made a huge thing out of the (unintelligible), which isn't true. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: That doesn't (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I have an operational problem. I've accepted several speaking engagements, uh, one at the New York Chamber of Commerce, or something like that (Tape Noise). Would you? Do it Monday?

UNIDENTIFIED: Sure.

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible) oh, have you?

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I think you should do it, John. (Unintelligible). I mean, I think you should do it, Bob.

HALDEMAN: Well, let's see, if, if I go on a leave of absence, I (unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: You've got to lay it out there and see if (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...entirely off the record and (unintelligible).

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible).

EHRLICHMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Say I want you to (unintelligible) to know what the facts area, I want you to know (unintelligible) President's been on top of this (unintelligible) damn thing, the President (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: Yeah. You got Sarnoff, you got, uh, Watson, you got...

EHRlichman: Taylor.

HALDEMAN: ...Taylor.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: You got all of those prominent figures (unintelligible).

UNIDENTIFIED: (Unintelligible) no press there and all the rest.

HALDEMAN: No press at all.

EHRlichman: No, no, it's just the names of large, the large companies.

PRESIDENT: They'll be outside the door, though, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: No way for 'em to be outside of that door...

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...they're way up on top of the millionth floor of the...

(Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...building and nobody -- now if it is announced, it's a private invitation thing. You couldn't, you couldn't sneak up.

PRESIDENT: Bob, uh, I think that sounds to me like a, a viable way to approach this at this point, and I think that, I think that, uh, your resignations would not solve anything now. I mean it, it would buy us a good headline for two days.

HALDEMAN: No, it would be a bad headline.

PRESIDENT: Let me say that--

HALDEMAN: It would be a big headline, but not a good one..

PRESIDENT: Well, it would be a good headline in the terms of, uh, Connally's, uh, view that a bold, uh, stroke, uh, I mean the President's cleaned his house and so forth.

HALDEMAN: I, I think I disagree.

PRESIDENT: I...

HALDEMAN: It will, you won't get one...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...sixteenth of an inch on the President cleaning his house.

PRESIDENT: It will say President admits guilt.

HALDEMAN: That's right. Or, Haldeman admits guilt, or, Haldeman out in Watergate scandal. Well that's all right.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

HALDEMAN: The President claims innocence or Haldeman claims innocence. It's obvious now that...

PRESIDENT: So, there's no way for me here, you see, you got, you've got to handle your (unintelligible) got to cut through the process (unintelligible), and the confidence of the Congress and the confidence of the country, and et cetera, et cetera. You've also got to (unintelligible) (sound of helicopter landing) got the (unintelligible).

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah. (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: ...see what we can find.

PRESIDENT: Well, John, how would you, uh -- do some thinking on that, uh... (unintelligible). Uh, uh...

EHRlichman: Let's see what Petersen tells you...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...and, uh... That's if we get... I'll get Wilson to gin up a letter in satisfactory form if you'd like to have that for your file.

PRESIDENT: Yes, we should get up a letter.

EHRlichman: All right.

HALDEMAN: For the file at least...

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: At your request this morning I made a study case of this da da da da, based on the facts da da da da da. Entirely two separate letters -- one for you and one for me.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Yeah, right.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Right. In regard to that, and, uh, well (unintelligible) on the whole, uh, the, the other way you can go, I think, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Tape Noise) I, I don't insist, I mean...

PRESIDENT: I, I was thinking, uh, whether the leave accomplishes anything, the leave only accomplishes something in a sense that there, there is the legal status of resignation and, uh...

HALDEMAN: I think that can be argued that it is...

EHRlichman: Publicly it is.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...or, or close to it. It's the same, it's the same thing, and, uh, and, uh, it would be perceived as...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. On the other hand, we have to realize that, uh...

HALDEMAN: ...although there's still a very good (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Yet, on the other hand we have to realize that, uh --

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) that he's doing something (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well...

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) we may not be able to (unintelligible) if it is, it may not be that bad.

PRESIDENT: Well, whatever (unintelligible) we've gotta fight it.

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) we're not gonna allow for it, we cannot allow a situation like this (unintelligible) let both you fellows know Goddamn well that as far as we were concerned, we weren't trying to cover this up, but they just -- we knew the Hunt thing couldn't last as far as that money was concerned, and I must say though, I would say that I was, we were all pleased when Mitchell got it to 'em, said it was taken care of, or were we?

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) I don't know how it was taken care of.

HALDEMAN (Unintelligible) got it. They may have turned it off.

PRESIDENT: My point is that I think we've probably discussed that with John. See what you can do, John.

EHRlichman: I, I don't believe -- I never did.

ALL TALKING: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Well, I, I'm not talking about you, but Bob and I. I said...Bob, uh, how long will it take you to do this?

HALDEMAN: I don't know.

PRESIDENT: Uh...

HALDEMAN: It depends on how quickly (unintelligible) I can find what I'm after. It'll take (unintelligible) John Dean less than (unintelligible) two hours (unintelligible). It'll take two hours at least.

PRESIDENT: (Tape Noise) (Unintelligible), John.
(Door Closes) (25 seconds
unintelligible/**REMOVED**) (Tape Noises/**REMOVED**)