



TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A TELEPHONE
CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND JOHN
EHRlichMAN ON APRIL 14, 1973 FROM 11:22 TO
11:53 P.M.

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FROM 11:22 TO 11:53 P.M.

PRESIDENT: Just wanted to see what your plans were tomorrow.

EHRLICHMAN: I've got to come in about, uh, nine o'clock,

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRLICHMAN: and see, uh, Strachan...

PRESIDENT: Good.

EHRLICHMAN: and uh I've got a, got a, a couple of calls coming in, one from Kalmbach's lawyer and uh, uh, I want to see Dean in the morning also. I've got him coming in and then I thought I'd see Ziegler, if I can work it in.

PRESIDENT: Uh hum.

EHRLICHMAN: I'd kinda like to cover several bases.

PRESIDENT: Let me say, (clears throat), with Ziegler, I've, the more I think about this, hmm, John, I think we ought to give him the full court.

EHRLICHMAN: Get what?

PRESIDENT: I think we ought to give him the full court.

EHRLICHMAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: I don't think it makes a hell of a lot of difference just to hold on Dean and so forth. I'd say since these charges have been made, I think that the men on the White House staff that have been charged and so forth, uh, uh, have a right to be heard publicly and uh, I think, and, and, uh that's that under the, under certain proper ground rules.

EHRlichman: OK, let me run that by Ron in the morning and get him accommodated to it, accustomed to it.

PRESIDENT: I know. But, isn't that really what we should do. I mean, I mean then...

EHRlichman: I feel, I feel it is.

PRESIDENT: ...then, then you just, uh, so you try to separate out and everything then maybe haggle around. You don't get it, but. And then maybe you can settle the God damn thing tomorrow with him.

EHRlichman: Alright, alright, I, I'm sure I can on those, on that basis...

PRESIDENT: And say because these charges are just flowing around and leaking and so forth. If you could, you know, give him hell about that.

EHRlichman: Alright.

PRESIDENT: And that we just can't have that thing uh...

EHRlichman: Right. Right.

PRESIDENT: As you know, (clears throat), I was talking to Bob and uh, Bob made the point. He says, "Well, just look at the what'll, what'll happen here." He says, "In a sense uh, so it'll be the evening news, basically then ah, you know what I mean, they aren't gonna run it live. Not, uh, not now when the.

EHRlichman: Uh hum.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, also the, there are chances that uh ho, how long, how much the committee can do. Particularly with Mitchell or, a somebody...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: his attorney, uh, joining.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, go on for a while. But uh, the, the point is, Bob says, "What do you want in the evening news?" You'll have, you want either seven minutes of John Chancellor and Weicker interpreting what was said in a secret session? Or do you want, uh, four minutes of that and maybe three minutes of Haldeman?"

EHRlichman: Well, that's a good point.

PRESIDENT: Is it, is that something to be considered?

EHRlichman: Sure is. At least we get a little piece of it that way.

PRESIDENT: You know, you see a man looking honest and earnest and so forth, uh, denying it in...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...a public forum where he just...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: you know, its-I just feel...

EHRlichman: Well, there's something that he said for setting a time limit.

PRESIDENT: Yes. And, uh, that...

EHRlichman: Are, are you planning to work tomorrow?

PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you sure, what I plan to do, I've got to do the Church thing.

EHRlichman: Sure.

PRESIDENT:

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in the morning and so I may not get there in the morning Well, anyway, you'll be busy all morning.

EHRlichman: But that's right. I've got, I've got plenty to do here.

PRESIDENT: So maybe in the afternoon around two o'clock or so, if you want to chat with me, I'll be around.

EHRlichman: OK.

PRESIDENT: And uh,...

EHRlichman: I'll uh, I'll leave word...

PRESIDENT: We'll see, we'll see, I'll, uh, I'll, I'll do your other business and so forth. John, uh, to uh, I wonder if we shouldn't reconsider, uh, if you shouldn't, uh, and you gotta consider this. Uh, rather than having Colson going there completely blind, give him at least a touch up. Or do you think that's too dangerous?

EHRlichman: Uh, say that again, I, I didn't quite hear it.

PRESIDENT: Colson, Colson, rather than, rather than just saying nothing to him if it just isn't well to say, "Look may, if you should know that uh, Magruder is gonna testify," and and, uh, so forth. Or is that dangerous according to Kleindienst?

EHRlichman: I don't, uh, I'm not so sure. (Clears throat) I'd have to call...

PRESIDENT: I thought Colson knows what the hell to...

EHRlichman: ...I have to call him anyway tomorrow. He's gotta, he's got an urgent call in for me.

PRESIDENT: Another urgent call, huh.

EHRlichman: Uh, um, I don't think I want to say anything at all to him about John. John incidentally, I understand was on the CBS news and just hard-lined them.

PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't, I agree on John.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I know, but about Magruder, that's what I meant.

EHRlichman: Well, I can, I can say something very brief. I don't need to indicate...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...that, that he said anything to me.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. But that, you understand, that he has talked. I mean, uh, ...

EHRlichman: Right. I could, I could...

PRESIDENT: Not to the Grand Jury but...

EHRlichman: I think I could safely go that far...

PRESIDENT: ...and say that, uh, he should know that before he goes and...

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: ...be prepared to...

EHRlichman: I'll, I'll call him in the morning.

PRESIDENT: ...uh, let me put it this way. I do think we owe it to Chuck to at least...

EHRlichman: Sure.

PRESIDENT: ...so that he doesn't, I mean, go in there and uh, and uh, frankly I'm, I'm on the perjury rap.

EHRlichman: I understand.

PRESIDENT: Uh.

EHRlichman: I don't, I don't think he's, uh, he's in any danger on that but, uh, uh, ...

PRESIDENT: Well, why wouldn't he be in any danger? Could you, well he got his story, and...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...and knows pretty well what...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...he s going to say.

EHRlichman: Yeah, he's pretty, I think Ws pretty pat.
But I will talk to him in the morning, and,
and, give him a cautionary note, anyway.

PRESIDENT: Of course, his urgent call may be just what
we know, or it may be, uh, more of something
on our friend, uh...

EHRlichman: Um.

PRESIDENT: ...what's that other guy, uh, Hunt.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Ain't a God damn thing you can to about that
either.

EHRlichman: No. No. I'll tell you, I'm um I'm going to
uh, probably see Kleindienst in the, oh
sometime tomorrow.

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

EHRlichman: And if for any reason you don't find me
there that's probably where I am.

PRESIDENT: And with him on the Special Prosecutor say,
"Look, Dick, that is, in view of the fact
that the U.S. Attorney is now doing such a
thorough job and since there's going to be
definite results from it, it would be a
terrible reflection on the system of
justice...

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: "...and this administration. We'd be in
effect admitting that uh, the Justice
Department was so corrupt that we, it
couldn't prosecute." But God Almighty, if
they prosecute a former Attorney General,
Jesus, John, what more can you ask?

EHRlichman: But pretty, pretty loose, (laughs), pretty independent.

PRESIDENT: I really, I really feel that.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, and that the Special Prosecutor thing can only open other avenues potentially. Uh, I don't mean that there's anything we want to cover up, but, uh, you know, he has to go through and...

EHRlichman: Well, uh, I think it's just folly.

PRESIDENT: Don't you think so?

EHRlichman: Yes sir!

PRESIDENT: And that, that's, that Dick could just say that you there's a difference of opinion, but this is it.

EHRlichman: Yeah. I'll do it.

PRESIDENT: Well, I've decided it then that uh, he...

EHRlichman: He wants to talk to you about it. But, I think I can take care of it tomorrow...

PRESIDENT: Uh um.

EHRlichman: ...without any problem.

PRESIDENT: But if it's necessary for him to come in and me to tell him that, I'll tell him.

EHRlichman: Yeah, I think I can handle it.

PRESIDENT: Now wait a minute, I'm not uh

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...adverse to it because...

EHRlichman: OK.

PRESIDENT: I think, my feeling frankly is this, that uh, you know I was just thinking tonight as I was making up my notes for this little talk. You know, what the hell, if, if, it's, I mean, if, if, it is a little melodramatic, but it's totally true that what happens in this office in these next four years will determine, could, will probably determine whether there is a chance, and God damn it's never (unintelligible) uh, what you could have uh, some sort of an uneasy peace for...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: ...the next twenty-five years.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And that's, that's my, what ever legacy we had, hell it isn't going to be in getting a cesspool for Winnetka. It's going to be there.

EHRlichman: Yep. Yep

PRESIDENT: And uh I and uh, I just feel that, uh, I've got to be in the position to be a, be clean and forthcoming and so forth. That's why I think that on the...

EHRlichman: Well, I totally agree with that.

PRESIDENT: ...on the committee, out so forth and so on.

EHRlichman: I totally agree with that.

PRESIDENT: Uh. we, think a little bit more about the Haldeman thing. My present thing is a, he raised it himself you know, this business, and uh, but uh, God I, I just, I just think you gotta fight for somebody. I don't know, but uh, what's your feeling at the moment?

EHRlichman: I don't think he's in that bad shape. I may be kidding myself but I...

PRESIDENT: Uh, the only thing that concerns me is what they said about Strachan.

EHRlichman: Yeah, well,

PRESIDENT: You don't think that relates that close...

EHRlichman: Let me, let me talk to him tomorrow and just see how much of that we have to swallow. He may, he may object to some of that, and uh, with good basis. So I'm...

PRESIDENT: ...so, you've gotta figure this too on, on Magruder, if I could suggest it. Uh, Magruder's probably believes he is telling what he knows.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: On the other hand, oh, this happened a long time ago and Magruder is a, is a very facile liar...

EHRlichman: Yes.

PRESIDENT: ...and, uh, he could well be thrashing around a bit here and uh, drawing conclusions and so forth and so on.

EHRlichman: Believes his own stories.

PRESIDENT: Yes. What do you think, I mean, because some of this...

EHRlichman: Well, I'll tell ya, uh, they, they told me that he was an extremely credible witness.

PRESIDENT: Yep.

EHRlichman: And uh, I can see why. He, he comes across very sincere, very earnest, and uh, very believable.

PRESIDENT: Uh um. That's right.

EHRlichman: And, but of course, uh, ya, ya have to, you'd have to balance what he says. A lot of what he says, uh, I have no way of, of corroborating or not corroborating.

PRESIDENT: You've gotta balance what he says with the fact that he was very believable when he lied.

EHRlichman: Yeah, that's what I say.

PRESIDENT: Now the question is, uh, how much of this is the truth and how much is it...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...something he believes to be the truth.

EHRlichman: Well, ab, about the only thing I can say is that it sounded credible but I, I can't vouch for it obviously.

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

EHRlichman: And that's one of the reasons why I want to get Gordon in.

PRESIDENT: One last thing. How do you, how do you see the Mitchell scenario, uh, rolling out, uh, John, uh, put yourself in his position and just, just sort of ruminate a bit and tell me how you see it rolling out.

EHRlichman: Well, I would...

PRESIDENT: First, you, you, you, you are convinced he will be indicted. Are you?

EHRlichman: Uh, yes.

PRESIDENT: You are.

EHRlichman: I don't think there is one chance in, uh, fifty...

PRESIDENT: Alright.

EHRlichman: ...that he won't be.

PRESIDENT: Alright, now...

EHRlichman: Uh, the uh, the court will open and publish them and then uh, he will probably arrange to come down and take delivery of the uh...

PRESIDENT: ...indictment.

EHRlichman: ...indictment. And, uh, I would guess he will hire F. Lee Bailey. That would be my hunch.

PRESIDENT: Um hum. Not a bad idea.

EHRlichman: Bailey will, he, he's got one problem in that the firm represents one of the other defendants. But uh...

PRESIDENT: Uh hum.

EHRlichman: ...he may be able to get around that.

PRESIDENT: Uh hum.

EHRlichman: And uh, whoever he gets will immediately move for a change of venue...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...and file eighty-nine motions.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Uh,

PRESIDENT: Motions to quash, motions...

EHRlichman: ...to, to dis...

PRESIDENT AND

EHRlichman: ...to disqualify the judge

EHRlichman: ...and, uh, attacking the legality of the Grand Jury and everything you can imagine. Uh...

PRESIDENT: Won't that take a little time?

EHRlichman: Yes, sir. You bet it will. My hunch is that the soonest he could get a case like that to trial would be the, the, the fall. September, October.

PRESIDENT: Really?

EHRlichman: Something of that kind.

PRESIDENT: Well, that, that leaves the committee hanging for a while, I suppose...

EHRlichman: Well,

PRESIDENT: ...that's good or not.

EHRlichman: I don't think they would let the committee proceed in the meantime.

PRESIDENT: You don't really...

EHRlichman: I mean they would use every effort to stop it and, I'm just guessing but just common sense tells me that they, they could stop it. I don't know the law. But uh...

PRESIDENT: One long shot. Should you talk to Ervin?

EHRlichman: Should I?

PRESIDENT: Yep.

EHRlichman: Confide in him?

PRESIDENT: Not totally.

EHRlichman: Oh, I don't think so. I can't trust him.

PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't trust him at all.

EHRlichman: Um, no, I can't. I, I just...

PRESIDENT: OK.

EHRlichman: ...wouldn't dare.

PRESIDENT: Alright.

EHRlichman: Uh, Kleindienst might at some later time.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) make the deal.

EHRlichman: And, but uh,

PRESIDENT: But make the deal. And I think, frankly let's get off of the God damn Executive Privilege.

EHRlichman: Get a little ride on it, huh, while we can.

PRESIDENT: Well, at least it's a, I do think it will cool a little of the uh, the Congressional stuff, you know.

EHRlichman: Uh hum.

PRESIDENT: I really do. I mean...

EHRlichman: Uh hum.

PRESIDENT: ...as I read the Congressional stuff.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I I say what the Christ, they can't understand this or that...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...or the other thing.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Alright. Now, we, we're, we're basically, also, it's bold, the President just said the, it's enough of this nonsense...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: Now we're going to fight.

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: You see what I mean?

EHRlichman: I get ya. OK, uh,

PRESIDENT: And it puts...

EHRlichman: It suits me.

PRESIDENT: ...it puts the President in a position of a, of being as forthcoming as we can, want the facts out.

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: ...and uh, and uh, that's that. And I'm not, and I'm not concerned about the word backing off and so forth. So sure, we'll back off. So that's a story for about two days.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Really.

EHRlichman: Yeah. I, I think that's great.

PRESIDENT: We've done lots of things with the Congress. We lose one. But, we, but you, in interpreting it would say we've reached a compromise...

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: ...with the committee.

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: Uh, it will be limited to this uh, to charges of wrongdoing.

EHRlichman: Uh hum.

PRESIDENT: Right?

EHRlichman: Uh hum. And they came a long way on the rules.

PRESIDENT: Hum. The rules now are provide adequate protection for...

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: ...Executive Privilege and uh, so the President says, "Have them all go."

EHRlichman: Yep. I think that's great.

PRESIDENT: But, putting it in the point that the President directed it...

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: ...and I think the...

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: ...I think that an idea that the President is stepped into this damn thing and says "Look God damn it let's get this stuff..."

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: "...done."

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: And, and, you, you go out and say the President says "Look, we've had enough talk, enough uh, bitching," and I think uh, and incidentally I wouldn't uh, I wouldn't just do it lightly, but I think uh this Lipschitz that uh, that ought to be, that uh, that the, the committee would, would hire with knowledge a bugger.

EHRlichman: Uh um.

PRESIDENT: I don't know, that doesn't, that sound a little bad to you?

EHRlichman: Yeah, we ought to be able to get a good ride on that.

PRESIDENT: Uh, yo, uh, maybe I'm been wishful thinking but I think its a, I think it's almost, uh, unbelievable that they knew it. And I think you should ask Ervin. "Ervin, Senator, did you know this?" Wouldn't you think so?

EHRlichman: I oughta, I oughta have some real fun with that.

PRESIDENT: And uh, but, when you're on a battle, and you re going to fight a God damn battle you're going to fight it to the finish.

EHRlichman: Fair enough.

PRESIDENT: And uh, the thing about uh, Bob, as I say is this, that uh, I get back to a fundamental point. Is he guilty or is he not? In my view he is not. Ya know.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And if he isn't, Jesus Christ, uh, uh, even if it means that the whole country and the Congress and uh, all the members of the House and the Senate say, "Resign, resign," the President says, "No. I will not, uh, take a, take an innocent, a man who is innocent. That's wrong, that's contrary to our system and I'm going to fight...

EHRlichman: Um hum

PRESIDENT: "...Fight for him." and uh, if., if evidence is brought out to the contrary, fine. But uh, then we'll take a look at it. But that's...

EHRlichman: ...Well that's, that's another reason for putting his statement out, it seems to me. It's the standard that you're flying, so to speak. So they'll shoot at it. But if they, if they never hit it, why then, you know, there's no room for argument.

PRESIDENT: You get that statement broadly circulated.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: What about, incidentally, uh, how about the drill of frankly telling our own leaders that and uh, getting them maybe charged up a little on this. And including, uh...

EHRlichman: Well, I've been doing a little thinking about that. I'm, I'm not so sure until we, we wind out the whole Judicial process here. The, the, the Grand Jury process that you're really going to be in much of a position to do that. We can--uh, I'll give that some more thought but uh...

PRESIDENT: You mean, uh, that because something's going to come out of the Grand Jury.

EHRlichman: Ya, yeah, you have sort of a half told tale.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, you can say, "Well, look I'm speaking just for the White House staff and uh, they're going to go up and testify.

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: "Now fellows, uh, give em a chance."

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: That's what I meant.

EHRlichman: I get ya. Uh, that at least, sure...

PRESIDENT: ...and, aft...

EHRlichman: Sure.

PRESIDENT: ...after you give them a chance then the President, uh, that they've all, then you say they've all given sworn statements on this thing and uh, we uh, we feel that uh, that we, we are uh, uh, we are due, owe our day in court and so forth and so on and...

EHRlichman: ...here's a, here's a copy of Haldeman's statement.

PRESIDENT: That's right,

EHRlichman: Um hum. Now we could certainly do that without making reference to the other.

PRESIDENT: Including Agnew and so forth.

EHRlichman: And, uh, you could, you could, trace the history of our attempt to cooperate with Ervin. Tell them about that.

Privileged material deleted.

PRESIDENT: Fine. Well John, you've had a hell of a week, two weeks and that's a, and of course poor Bob is out going through the tortures of the damned.

EHRlichman: Yeah, that family thing is rough.

PRESIDENT: I know, the family thing and, but, but with the, apart from the family thing, you know, here's a guy that, Christ, has just given his life, hours and hours and hours, you know, without, totally selfless and honest and decent, that's another thing. God damn it to hell, I just am about, about to, about to say well you know, you get, you get, you get the argument of some anybody that, anybody that's been charged against fire him. Jesus Christ, I mean, you can't, you can't do that, John.

EHRlichman: Um bum.

PRESIDENT: Or, or am I wrong? I don't know.

EHRlichman: No, you're right.

PRESIDENT: Well, maybe I'm not right. I asked you,

EHRlichman: Well, it's either you are...

PRESIDENT: You'd say, you'd say clean the boards. Well, God is that our system?

EHRlichman: Well, that isn't a system. That's you know, that's a machine.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: That's, that's uh part of...

PRESIDENT: But, how do you feel, honestly? I mean, you, cause we apart from the personal feelings we both have for Bob, don't you? You know I raised this myself. I said, Well, one way out is say "Well, look, as long as all of these guys have been charged, out they go and uh, then they can fight this battle and they can return when they get, get cleared." Not good. Is it?

EHRlichman: You know. I don't think it is. Uh, I don't think that's any way to run a railroad. I just think you've gotta have...

PRESIDENT: I suppose that would probably be the view of the purists. Uh, what does Len think on that? Does he think that really?

EHRlichman: I don't know. I, I think you have to uh, ...

PRESIDENT: ... Well, that's irrelevant...

EHRlichman: ...you have to show some, some heart on the thing.

PRESIDENT: Well, the point, is you know uh, whatever we say about Harry Truman, you know and so forth, while it hurt him, a lot of people admired the old bastard for standing by people who,...

EHRlichman: Sure.

PRESIDENT: ...who were, who...

EHRlichman: Sure.

PRESIDENT: ...who were really guilty as hell.

EHRlichman: Yeah. Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, and uh, damn it. I'm, I'm, I'm that kind of person. I'm not one that's gonna, gonna, gonna say, "Look, before this guy's under attack. I, I, I, I, I'd drop 'em."

EHRlichman: UM.

PRESIDENT: Don't you, uh, is there something to be said for that or not?

EHRlichman: Uh, I don't -think uh, number one I don't think you'd gain anything by it, if a problem doesn't go awry.

PRESIDENT: No, they'll say, "Oh, Jesus that does show that Nixon here is, here is top person, the closest man to him, in the office four or five hours a day, and out he goes."

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: But, Christ everything must be wrong.

EHRlichman: Yep, that's it.

PRESIDENT: and, and...

EHRlichman: ...then separate the Siamese twins.

PRESIDENT: We've done so many good things, you know, which Bob has worked on so arduously and uh, God damn it, so there will be, there will be fragments here and there, but Christ we, people, make mistakes. You don't fire a guy for a mistake, do you?

EHRlichman: No.

PRESIDENT: No, not for a, not for a well intentioned mistake.

EHRlichman: No, that's right, that's right.

PRESIDENT: But, uh, I just uh, I, I, I have a view of drawing up the line. At one point you're going to talk to Dean.

EHRlichman: I am. I, I...

PRESIDENT: What are you going to say to him?

EHRlichman: Well, I'm gonna try and get him, I'm gonna try and get him around a bit, but it's going to be delicate.

PRESIDENT: Get him around in what way?

EHRlichman: Well to uh, to uh, get off this uh, passing the buck business. It's...

PRESIDENT: ...John, that's...

EHRlichman: ...It's a little touchy and I don't...

PRESIDENT: John, that's...

EHRlichman: ...and I don't know how far I can go.

PRESIDENT: ...not going to, uh, that's not going to help you. Look, he's gotta look down the road to, to one point. But, uh, there's only one man that could restore him to the ability to practice law in the case things still go wrong.

EHRlichman: Um hum. Um hum.

PRESIDENT: Now that uh, uh, he's got to have that in the back of his mind.

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: And he's got to know that'll happen. You know, I don't, you don't tell him

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: but you know and I know that

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: with him and Mitchell, there isn't gonna be a God damn question. Because we got a bum rap. God damn it if Lipschitz gets off with a...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...with copping a plea...

EHRlichman: (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: and, and, getting a suspended sentence, what in the name of Christ is this all about. All that it involves, of course, we have to be fair, it involves, uh, the highest...

EHRlichman: The king of the mountain...

PRESIDENT: The king of the mountain...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...the, uh, trying to keep, uh, suppress the facts and so forth. I do, and I think you thought I was sort of, sort of being facetious about saying get everybody, all these people and this includes LaRue, and Mardian and of course uh, of course Kalmbach. Uh, they've gotta have it and Dean too. They've gotta have a straight damn line that, of course we raised money. Be very honest about it. But, uh, we raised money for a purpose that we thought was perfectly proper.

EHRlichman: Um hum. Uh hum.

PRESIDENT: But we didn't want to shut 'em up. These men were guilty.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Right?

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: And uh, they are, we weren't trying to shut them up, we just didn't, we didn't want 'em to talk to the press.

EHRlichman: Yeah, yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's perfectly legitimate, isn't it? Or is it? Legitimate not to want them to talk to the press.

EHRlichman: I think it is. I uh, I, I don't have a perfect understanding of the, of the law on that and I...

PRESIDENT: You'd say that old Dick was really shaken?

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: He really was.

PRESIDENT: God damn it. I, I told him once, I said, "Dick, I said, the real target here is Mitchell." He said, "Oh no, it can't be." You know, now, he's sort of got the idea, I think, that probably it's Haldeman or Colson.

EHRlichman: Well, he uh, he, I'm sure he's going to call me first thing in the morning.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. But with him I would be very tough, I'd say, "Dick, uh, let's not crap around, I mean, they're after Mitclell and they're going to get him, at the present time. At least that's what our evidence, that's what, what our information...

EHRlichman: um hum.

PRESIDENT: ...indicates...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: ...and so here's where we go."

EHRlichman: And he's probably doing a little checking with his U.S. Attorney tonight.

PRESIDENT: He'd do that?

EHRlichman: Oh sure, sure. He has to make the ultimate prosecutive decision or else he has to del, delegate it to somebody. So he's entitled to know...

PRESIDENT: Your poing is that he would delegate to the Dean. I think that the Dean is the best one to delegate it to.

EHRlichman: Yeah, I do too.

PRESIDENT: Rather than you know, rather than, John, the suggestion that well you resign and then we'll put another Attorney General. That would be a, ...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: ...that would be a hell of an admission that Christ, that we thought...

EHRlichman; He, he isn't gonna want to do that would be my guess. He isn't gonna want to resign at this point.

PRESIDENT: He shouldn't, uh, you know, when I come to think about it. I think that he should for other reasons. But uh, Jesus, if we could get the Ellsberg case over, I'd just like to get that FBI...

EHRlichman: Um hum, uh hum.

PRESIDENT: Is there any way at all that you can? You're going to talk to Ziegler-that you can get out the fact that you, you have conducted a thorough investigation?

EHRlichman: We'll work on that. I think there is.

PRESIDENT: I think we have to get that out...

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: ...don't you?

EHRlichman: I think so.

PRESIDENT: The President is calling the signals.

EHRlichman: I, I suspect that somebody's going to put it together. I, my, hunch is the New York Times will. They're going to put together, you see, they have the story that Colson was in yesterday.

PRESIDENT: And they know that Mitchell was in.

EHRlichman: And, of course, the, all the wires have that Mitchell was in today.

PRESIDENT: They have? Um hum.

EHRlichman: So, uh, somebody's going to start stringing all this together.

PRESIDENT: And so what would happen? You'd have Ziegler or yourself go out and say, "Yes, I have seen them." Or you, haven't thought that through.

EHRlichman: Well, I think I'd, I wouldn't have to say I'd seen them. I could a, we could a, say that uh we, we've had a job of work going on for several years.

PRESIDENT: But you can say that the President, because of the charges that have been made, wanted an independent investigation made. And he ordered, directed you to make it.

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: You've made an independent investigation of the situation, because the President wants, if there's anybody is, who is guilty in this thing, he said, uh, he must through the Judicial processes be brought to, brought to the bar. Is that what you'd say?

EHRlichman: Yep. Well, or, or simply to aid you in uh, in uh, analyzing the steps that ought to be taken here. You`re, you`re being asked to do a lot...

PRESIDENT: You could say the President...

EHRlichman: ...of quite extraordinary things.

PRESIDENT: You could say, "The President, President wants this matter cleaned up, once and for all."

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: It's been hanging around and yacked about and innocent people have been hurt in the process...

EHRlichman: Right.

PRESIDENT: ...and charges are being throwing around now we`ve got a Judicial process and we want this thing...

EHRlichman: Beyond that...

PRESIDENT: ...finished.

EHRlichman: ...beyond that you`ve had all kinds of Senators and Congressmen calling for the appointment of uh,...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...of uh, special commissions and all that kind of thing...

PRESIDENT: So you're it.

EHRlichman: ...for, for, uh, you uh, to come to any sort of a judgment on those kinds of proposals you have to, have a pretty clear understanding of the facts.

PRESIDENT: Right. Well, with Dean, I think you could talk to him in confidence about uh, about a thing like that, don't you? He isn't gonna...

EHRlichman: I'm not sure. I, I just don't know how, how much to lean on...

PRESIDENT: I see.

EHRlichman: ...that reed at the moment. But, uh, I'll sound it out.

PRESIDENT: Well, you start with the proposition, "Dean, uh, the President thinks you've just been a, you know, you've carried a tremendous load and he has, his affection and loyalty to you is just undiminished...

EHRlichman: Alright.

PRESIDENT: "...And uh, now let's see where the hell we go and...

EHRlichman: Uh Hum.

PRESIDENT: "...we can't get the President involved in this." His people, just, I mean that's one thing we don't want to cover up, but uh...

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...uh, there are ways that he can and then he's got to say that, that, for example, you start with him certainly on the business of the obstruction of justice.

EHRlichman: That's right. That's right.

PRESIDENT: Say, "Look John, let's, we need a plan here...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: "...And uh,...

EHRlichman: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: "...so that uh, so that LaRue, Mardian and a, a, the others." I mean Christ, uh...

EHRlichman: Yeah. I'm not sure I can go that far with him.

PRESIDENT: No. He killed (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) I'll sound it out.

PRESIDENT: Right. Well, get a good night's sleep.

EHRlichman: Thank you sir.

PRESIDENT: I'll bet you do...

EHRlichman: Alright.

PRESIDENT: ...sleep well. And if you don't have a way, it's a curious thing, uh, not curious at all but uh, John it's, it's, it's just, it's well, it's terribly painful of course, and I was thinking you know, to have, to go to that damn dinner tonight.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But my point is, well, it is painful and I just feel better about getting the God damn thing done.

EHRlichman: Good.

PRESIDENT: Or, or do you agree?

EHRlichman: Absolutely.

PRESIDENT: And after all, I'm, it's my job and I don't want this, I don't want the Presidency tarnished, but also I don't, I, I, I'm a law enforcement man.

EHRlichman: Yep.

PRESIDENT: And, right?

EHRlichman: Yep, and you've got to move on to more important things.

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PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's right. OK buddy.

EHRlichman: Alright sir.

PRESIDENT: See you tomorrow.