

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING AMONG THE PRESIDENT,
H.R. HALDEMAN AND JOHN EHRLICHMAN ON APRIL 19, 1973 FROM
9:31 A.M. TO 10:12 A.M.



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PRESIDENT: Well, what I wanted to say was this uh, other thing is that (unintelligible) counselor. Let's just let it dangle tomorrow, I don't know and uh, if nothing is gonna (unintelligible) for a week. I thought, or (unintelligible) I don't have any other persons...

EHRLICHMAN: I, I...

PRESIDENT: ...around.

EHRLICHMAN: Yeah, I don't, I don't have anyone really to suggest to you. We may have somebody tucked away in a...

PRESIDENT: Well, I'm gonna have to get a counselor in another department.

EHRLICHMAN: In a department that we could bring over. Now this Herb guy for instance, in transportation by the name of Bar, who's wasted there.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRLICHMAN: Uh and there are two or three others like that. And yet...

PRESIDENT: Could we get one of those?

EHRLICHMAN: Yes, sure we could.

PRESIDENT: What do you do with a Fielding, for example? Fielding is uh, uh...

EHRLICHMAN: Fielding can work for the new man and provide continuity. He's really not of the sector, and uh, Fielding...

PRESIDENT: What we have to do (unintelligible) I believe (unintelligible)

EHRlichman: I'd like to have you meet him anyway, and uh...

PRESIDENT: Well, I don't...

EHRlichman: Okay, okay.

PRESIDENT: I'll keep him as a good lawyer.

EHRlichman: Well, he's not only a good lawyer, he's a superb young (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I don't want to see the lawyer.

EHRlichman: An, '-right'. I will see him.

PRESIDENT: When you have the time, come over and ask him if he'll be counsel to the White House.

HALDEMAN: The understanding is that he should move into the counsel's role with no responsibility direct or indirect in any way or anything relating to the Watergate case at all.

PRESIDENT: Well then, who's gonna take that?

HALDEMAN: Dean oughta be pulled out of that, too.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Who's gonna handle Watergate?

HALDEMAN: I don't think anybody in the White House counsel office

EHRlichman: Well, the President's gotta have somebody...

PRESIDENT: Somebody to assert privilege.

EHRlichman: ...who is, one asserting privilege, two, who is riding along as a repository of information.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And who can handle things like subpoenas being delivered over here.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Well, I tell you I, uh, hesitate to recommend Bark-.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, because he managed...

EHRlichman: He's gotten so emotional about this whole thing, uh, what we really need a cool, collected guy.

PRESIDENT: Well, let Mark do it.

EHRlichman: I think he could.

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: In other words, uh, it doesn't matter in (unintelligible) case. We, we run--we, uh--sort of a delicate thing--we could take a (unintelligible) course around the committee, it's true. But...

HALDEMAN: My problem, my problem is having (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: My thought is, darn it ought to continue to prepare the Ervin Committee proceedings.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: And that should be his responsibility.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Uh, and I think he'll do a good job of it because he'll have uh, television in the PR sense and so on.

PRESIDENT: Right. Okay. The other thing that occurs to me is that, uh, once these, this kind of story gets billed (unintelligible) Jack Anderson has a column that everybody else (unintelligible) and so forth and so on. I guess, I just dread, frankly, the possibility of their feeding on itself to the point (unintelligible) where (unintelligible) reasonably all right with you is in, in one column. Anderson (unintelligible). But in the end, you know, it's a question of their view on the God damned thing.

EHRlichman: What...

PRESIDENT: And uh, I, I just, I'm not speaking just from the standpoint of, uh, I mean I, it just irritates me when people like Garment and others come in here and say, the hell with the people, the Presidency is bigger and so forth. They can't, you can't separate the Presidency from (unintelligible) the people, the loyal people and I will not do it, God damn it. Remember, I--often told you that Eisenhower said (unintelligible) and basically you folks didn't do a God.damn thing. It happens, uh, at least (unintelligible) a small way (unintelligible) didn't mean to do anything bad. You know what I mean. Well now, the thing I am concerned about, though, looking at it coldly from-a PR standpoint, from your standpoint, I think we've got to figure that I've just, let's just not let the day come, that uh, when uh, the Grand Jury as a result uh, the Grand Jury sends us and now will give us twelve hours notice, let's suppose we get twelve hours notice (unintelligible). Is Magruder before the Grand Jury today?

HALDEMAN: We don't know, the Post says so. Well, we apparently can't find out if they can't

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) before the Grand Jury was because (unintelligible). Well, I can get hold of Petersen. I think the least I could do is to get him in and lay out this whole business.

HALDEMAN: I just wonder if that would be good before we meet with our lawyers. Yes. And if we have no lawyers (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Yeah, maybe I'll try. (Unintelligible) I'm gonna level about the national security stuff what I'm going to say is you know the Bureau. Anyway, you know that Edgar had very, very close ties with, with Marx people, you know they didn't want to investigate.the Ellsberg thing. Under the circumstances we had no choice-but to go ahead

PRESIDENT: and do it in the White.House. We did
(CONT.) our best, and finally Hoover did take over
the case by Mitchell's direct orders.

EHRlichman: You will find in the file an, an admonition
to Hoover from here and I don't know if it
was you personally, or me , or who, Krogh
maybe, that this was to be handled as a
principal case. He had laid back for months
and months and months and refused to let his
agents get into it.

PRESIDENT: That's right, so we couldn't use the agents,
we couldn't use the (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Well, he was, he was very tender about how
agents would be used in this case.

PRESIDENT: Because of the, because of the Marx (unin
.telligible).

EHRlichman: And so certain rather routine investigatory
efforts were conducted from here.

PRESIDENT: That's right, because it involved national
security...

EHRlichman: This one, this one was apparently in excess.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

EHRlichman: But in the context of how the Bureau
works...

PRESIDENT: The Bureau...

EHRlichman: ...they might have done the same damn thing.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Unintelligible) the situation is
there. The thing is that we, I think we're
getting to the point where we
(unintelligible). I don't know what you
talked about at the breakfast and so forth
(unintelligible) but at least we can think
about it.

EHRlichman: Sure and uh, timing uh, is out of our hands
in a way, but uh, I, I would hope that we
can let these fellows have a run at this
today.

PRESIDENT: Oh yes.

EHRlichman: And uh...

PRESIDENT: Yes, yes, oh I didn't mean, I didn't mean to do it today, this morning, I'm simply saying that I, that I, don't want it to catch up with us maybe...like tomorrow night or something (unintelligible) just get the son-of-a-bitch uh, uh, unplugged so that uh, you know, we, you talk; in terms of persons and I said, let's separate uh, the, the innocent people, Mitchell and Magruder, well in a sense they've been nailed, Mitchell and Magruder., in the public mind, and in a sense, too, they may have Mitchell and Magruder and then they get Haldeman and Ehrlichman and splash it pretty hard. You could argue another way, from the PR standpoint, you could say Haldeman and Ehrlichman by God stepped out in front and said, "Well we're, we are not, we're not going to allow the White House to be involved in this, we're gonna fight this battle, we're gonna fight it in uh, protection of some people, that is, uh, we totally disapproved of this, we had no knowledge of it--in other words, I'd slap that on them, and I would say (unintelligible) under the circumstances it.'s essential to fight this battle, let me tell you that, my last definition. We want to handle the PR thing right. Also, you've got to fight, both of you, all the way with your lawyers using every legal device there is to avoid the prosecution. I, I think it can be done, and I, as I, I think both of you can do it. Uh, uh, they, they have one hell of a case to prove. You know what I mean? So on that score let's see where we stand. (Pause) Well, shall I (unintelligible). Did you want to say something, Bob?

HALDEMAN: Well, I was just gonna, I think it was interesting, cause Henry called this morning, uh (unintelligible) to make his point to

HALDEMAN: me about uh, what his view was. He makes
(CONT.) basically the same, same point that, that,
uh, if we are on a path where we are going
to be nibbled

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...or, or, in one stroke, or nibbling by
nibbling, we ultimately are on a path of, of
destruction in other words where they get
to--just what you're saying.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...You're getting to the point where you
have to go anyway, that we should move ahead
of that on a positive basis and, and fight
it externally. But then he said, "Don't
take that step until you're totally
convinced that the other result is
inevitable. As long as there is still a
chance that you can still stay ahead of the
other, the White House is gonna be badly
hurt." I think this is true although maybe
I'm not being objective. I think the
President is going to be badly hurt by our
stepping out.

PRESIDENT: I agree. Well, the President's been badly
hurt (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, I'm not sure yet. You see, we're
overreacting to a lot of that
(unintelligible). You look at what's here
now, we've been badly hurt by some-.people
that have badly served you; what you've got
to decide is where the line is drawn, who's
badly served you and who didn't.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: If I step out, my position has got to be,
and I've got a very good public case, that,
that that you and I, and then I'll transfer
it to me, were badly served by a number of
people. I'm not sure yet even who they all
are.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: And as I said to Henry,,I can't tell you, Henry...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Magruder.

HALDEMAN: I can't, I can't tell

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) you John?

EHRlichman: Yes, I think, that's, that's; the, the main, the main, and Magruder really (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible) Mitchell and Dean.

EHRlichman: Mitchell and Dean.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell and Dean.

HALDEMAN: It was the principals that you were (unintelligible) served by.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) onto it, yeah.

HALDEMAN: Magruder, what's Magruder--was doing what people pressed him into doing.

PRESIDENT: Well, I suppose, I suppose you know thatuh--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Attorney General.

PRESIDENT: We were all, we were all sitting thereand there was the campaign. We said, "What the hell else can we do." I guess we all sort of said, "Well Christ, that's it."

HALDEMAN: Yes, but the p9int is through all of that, I did not know, and you did not know, and I don't know today, and I don't believe you do really, what happened in the Watergate case.

PRESIDENT: No, I don't.

HALDEMAN: I would not be willing to write out a scenario that said I knew this is the case.

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PRESIDENT: I wouldn't, either.

HALDEMAN: Cause I don't know.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) well, the question I want to (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: And the report I gave you starts out saying, "I'm not sure, but this is my, this is my conclusion based on three weeks of intensive interrogation of fifteen people."

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) back to the beginning that the position I was in, and I would feel I'm entitled to,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...to do anything as a result of an opinion. I can't act responsibly unless I know that...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: I don't know where Colson is yet. I think that remains to be seen.

EHRlichman: Colson's trying to stay very close to you. He's doing his best, and he's calling every day, and he wants to come over and see me today, and so on and so forth.

PRESIDENT: He wants to talk to me at this point.

EHRlichman: Right. But I mean he's trying to be, is he's trying (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

EHRlichman: Uh, interesting thing that you should remember that I forgot and dredged up in my records last night. Richard Kleindienst was in Los Angeles when we get to San Clemente.

PRESIDENT: This year?

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EHRlichman: This last trip. And we had him come down, and he had a private meeting with you in San Clemente on about the 20, no, on about the 31st of March. We flew out the 30th, he came down early in the morning on the 31st before he went to New York.

HalDEMAN: Met with us

EHRlichman: Met with us for an hour or so. I informed him that you had my letter and, it uh, appointed me to get into this.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

EHRlichman: And that Dean was out of it.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: We discussed a lot of the ramifications, he then went and had a private conversation with you. Remember I sat outside in case you needed me. And, so, that ought to be added into the mix in terms of the whole sequence of events...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: ...so that you were on top of it on the 31st of March.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And uh, that he was informed of the White House effort.

PRESIDENT: Back on the, the 31st of March, that's, that's something that I had neglected to put on my calendar (20 second unintelligible/**REMOVED**). Let's face the fact. I was trying to get the God damn facts when these cases (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Check.

PRESIDENT: And I kept saying (unintelligible) Grand Jury I don't know what the hell, they, I mean I've got to know.

HALDEMAN: Um hum.

PRESIDENT: And I said (unintelligible). I agree, Bob, that your (unintelligible) the question is uh, the question is we have to realize that you're being driven out of your corner. (Unintelligible) Which doesn't help.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) because if I leave today I was driven out by being absolutely (unintelligible) it doesn't matter.

EHRlichman: It depends on the circumstances and, and we don't know yet what the circumstances will be. Uh, uh, if I had to bet on Petersen's scenario right now that Magruder will go on over to court and hang us...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: ...I would, I would take odds he won't. Now, that may be born of a forlorn hope, but...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. But on the other hand...

EHRlichman: ...but uh, it's uh...

PRESIDENT: Dean (unintelligible) and his lawyers are probably jumping up and down.

EHRlichman: Sure they are.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Sure they are. But, but that may be trouble again. We don't know what the circumstance of Dean's return blast will be if there is one.

EHRlichman:

(CONT.) Uh, uh, or whether we're gonna be hurt by it. I, I'd hate to be in the position of paying on here...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) the President said Haldeman and Ehrlichman are willing to resign.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) let me make a case in point, maybe it's irrelevant but it is to me. I think we made a serious mistake in, in forcing Chapin to resign on the assumption that we had to get him out so that he wouldn't be forced out later. We jumped ahead of the facts, and we jumped wrong. We lost a good man, in the process we hurt a guy badly...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...in the process, and uh, served no useful purpose as it now develops. Whether he was here or there never made the least bit of difference now.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. No.

HALDEMAN: Uh, I just, naturally my own interest is at stake in, in, the next step but I, I think from the Presidency's interest, you have a question whether it is better served by our getting out or staying in.

EHRlichman: Look, you, you,?...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: ...you...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: ...you have to be totally comfortable with our staying...

PRESIDENT: No, I'm comfortable.

EHRlichman: Otherwise it would never, it would never work.

PRESIDENT: No, no. Frankly, I, you know when I (unintelligible) decide an exploring the PR aspects

EHRlichman: Sure,

PRESIDENT: ...I'm comfortable as hell.

EHRlichman: Sure, well

PRESIDENT: Otherwise why the hell did you think I took Garment's, uh,.advice?

EHRlichman: Well I understand, you know, I understand.

PRESIDENT: I've been uh (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: But, I just want...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) just for the record, I'm comfortable (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: ...I just want to say again that uh...

PRESIDENT: What I'm saying is that both of you are damn good on the PR side, and I just want you to think of the PR side.

EHRlichman: But

PRESIDENT: In terms of yourselves and in terms of us, but also in terms of, uh...

EHRlichman: There is a, there is a, an intangible ingredient here.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Called quote, the President's confidence, unquote.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: Which Ziegler goes out and spins occasionally when he says the President backs Pat Gray on the Hill.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

EHRlichman: When you do that, you pump adrenalin into Pat Gray's future up there just through the fact that your having said that. There are other ways that you do that.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And that's by not doing things.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And to the extent that that pumps adrenalin in with my viability or my reputation or my ability to cope with the problem, it's obviously to my interest.

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: And so, that's something that I would hope would be spent very sparingly. That in other words we, we'd be very slow in just uh, uhtossing that away.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Uh, that's why I say I think we ought to wait and see what develops here.

PRESIDENT: All right.

EHRlichman: See what Petersen says to you this morning, see what our law-lawyers can find out, and then match them up. I suspect our lawyers will hear one thing and you'll hear another. That's my prediction.

PRESIDENT: Uh yeah, yeah. I'm sorry I have to see (unintelligible) now. So. Well" I'm not going to, uh (unintelligible) will you see if you can get Henry Petersen to come over now, please? And uh, okay, uh, I'm not going to call for you today, I'm gonna try to (unintelligible). Well, I mean uh, how many times have we said, "Well, let's take a day off from this thing, let's take a weekend."

HALDEMAN: Yeah (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Then something happens. The uh, the speed (unintelligible) my problems is uh, (unintelligible) if you consider (unintelligible) the last couple of weeks that he chooses for the last time. Anyway, the not urgent but personal things, the uh, uh, the problem we have is that I have to solve them the (unintelligible). I, I, I, I, honestly can tell you that I spend my resources in a very deliberate way, and uh, and uh, you know, he might soften. I hope (unintelligible) plays (unintelligible) follow instructions (unintelligible) horrible mess already so I and ah, the, the period since the election, uh, the considered reorganization followed by the by*, followed by the agony of the Congress, followed by this and so forth has been extremely hard on me, and I hope, I think I will see it through, I can sweat it out, in the meantime I will, I will (unintelligible) miserable (unintelligible) problem (unintelligible) stuff,

RESTRICTED-"D"

So uh, the problem I have is uh, facing the, you know, we sit around here yesterday and talked about the economy and Henry will be in today to talk about bombing South Vietnam again, and an issue that uh, (unintelligible) well, I think, but the wear and effect of that is enormous, .is enormous, and it may be destructive, it may be, it may be fatal.

PRESIDENT:

(CONT.)

I think you should be aware of that and, uh, so I was not really kidding about any thing, and uh, I don't-know what can happen. The second point is that (unintelligible) I don't want to be totally, I wonder if this whole thing, whether you I stayed or not is not so destructive that our ability to govern will be totally destroyed--that's what we, that's, that's really Henry's point.

EHRlichman:

I think that depends on how you handle yourself in the next few months. Uh, if you take occasions to separate yourself from this, take occasions to condemn the wrongdoers in a way that not, not...

PRESIDENT:

Not (unintelligible)

EHRlichman:

...faultily but uh, uh, (unintelligible, with noise) uh, if you communicate uh, uh, uh, your sentiments uh, in some way or other, as backgrounders or otherwise, uh, I think you can come through this rough water uh, very nicely, uh, the uh, the it's certainly uh, but you (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN:

Absolutely. I don't, I don't think it's, even remotely approaches being fatal. I think it's, it's one more--matter (unintelligible) you got to hang through and rise above it as you, as you do it. And uh, I understand your point, you can only do so (unintelligible) you got so much in you.

PRESIDENT:

Why Mitchell has set up this thing, speak out.

HALDEMAN:

It wouldn't make any difference if he did.

EHRlichman:

Reston had an interesting article on Mitchell yesterday where he said that, so that (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT:

(Unintelligible), Oh, what did it say?

EHRlichman: He said that they don't understand why Mitchell doesn't come forward to state responsibilities. But uh, I think uh, if:,I could, if I could say so, that if you will spend a week in Florida and not take calls and just delegate to uh, Ash, Shultz, hell, they can't wreck, the country in a week. Uh, Kissinger and Henry and really and, and just get the hell out of here. And take the lid off and don't read the papers and don't read...

PRESIDENT: Don't worry, I don't read the paper.

EHRlichman: Well, I mean just read, you know, you would be inclined to, Bebe will say (unintelligible) the Watergate did this and that today.

PRESIDENT: Bebe doesn't do that.

EHRlichman: Okay, great guy. But if you could just detach yourself for a week and then come back from the mountains, so to speak, with a fresh perspective on this and sit in the sun and listen to some good music and see some shows and just take a week off, uh I, I just think you'll come back with an.entirely different view of this.

HALDEMAN: That's the best advice you've gotten.

PRESIDENT: Thank you.

EHRlichman: Well...

HALDEMAN: You'll have to fix your (unintelligible) but the way you're talking now, the, the viewpoint you're taking, is the only problem in this that isn't in-, is insurmountable, isn't surmountable, or is insurmountable.

PRESIDENT: You're in a lot better frame of mind right now.

HALDEMAN: For a damn good reason.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well I'm sure that you (unintelligible)

EHRlichman: No (unintelligible) for your frame of mind and, and it shows to us, and that's something that's been concerning us. And you will show it as time goes on.

HALDEMAN: We're also students of your public presentation, and your, you do-a damn good job to a point. But nobody, you can only go in to a certain point (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...and these people out here watch you very carefully, and they've been given no opportunity to watch you for awhile and you ought to go through this. You've pulled away other times when you, when you run into a problem and you're in one now.

PRESIDENT: (Sighs)

HALDEMAN: The way you've dealt with them and dealt with them well is to get out of them and out of the doing of them for a time and working over yourself (unintelligible) in the process of that you may--first place, we're assuming a set of events that we don't know is gonna take place. We've got to be prepared for it (unintelligible) but we don't have to, we aren't sure of the course of them yet.

(Privileged material deleted)

PRESIDENT: Coming to this one, I suppose that the uh, that the strongest argument that can be made from that uh, the other point of view is uh, you know what John calls "the let it all hang out" theory, and uh, they say, "Well, gee whiz, the President must be like Caesar's wife." There ain't gonna be anybody around here to do this son-of-a-bitchin' thing (unintelligible). it's hard to find anybody that (unintelligible). They asked Rose about getting money for these people.

EHRlichman: Well, I think...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I mean, it's really God damn hard to find people that (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Right now you've got to consolidate your gain. You gained the other day.

PRESIDENT: By going out.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, right.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) this man, and he's--the press, even the Washington Post is writing good editorials about it. Now if you can get out the chronology of how you got into this and r-, rooted it out.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. The only man that can get that out is John Ehrlichman.

EHRlichman: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And I think you'd better do it. Whatever, whatever we do, the only man, the only problem we've got there is what we do with regard to John Dean, and I think maybe John Dean is gonna do it anyway.

EHRlichman: That's smart, too.

PRESIDENT: Uh...

EHRlichman: If he, if he, if he uh...

HALDEMAN: Now he may not, he may not do even--he either will do it anyway or he won't do it anyway. It's a powerful, there are powerful forces that weigh against his doing it, so it's a good possibility he won't.

PRESIDENT: The most powerful force of what he's against doing it is if he doesn't get immunity and has to look for an amnesty.

HALDEMAN: And Petersen is the lynch,man.

PRESIDENT: That's, that's the most powerful personal factor.

EHRlichman: Now, today is what, Thursday?

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: Do you want this in the news magazine special?

PRESIDENT: Sure.

EHRlichman: Cause I can have it in two news magazines then or I could have U.S. News in.

PRESIDENT: No, I guess we won't do it.

HALDEMAN: Uh, what are, what are the uh

PRESIDENT: Uh, well...

HALDEMAN: I don't think you need any uh, you need a (unintelligible) uh, you, you're mixed up now, you're on top now, let it, you, you got, what, what equity you got, run out

PRESIDENT: I, I agree.

HALDEMAN: ...as, as, as carefully as you can.

PRESIDENT: I agree with that.

HALDEMAN: You (unintelligible) a big chunk when I went out to the press room the other day, and it bought you a lot and you're still getting the payoff.

PRESIDENT: Hum. You know why it bought us that because they saw us on the sword with the blood running out.

EHRlichman: Well, not only that, it sells papers but uh, as yet, I think you're gonna do it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: You are in a rotten frame of mind on this, uh you are (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: So are you.

EHRlichman: I, well, I have, no, as a matter of fact I'm not. Uh...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Well, that and...

HALDEMAN: No, not yet we're ready for, we're ready to figure it out (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: I, I'm very confident, I'm very confident, that the right thing is going to turn out and uh...

PRESIDENT: A few, couple days ago I, you were (unintelligible) well, remember when you had that call?

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: From Gray, you said, "Christ, he just sunk me."

EHRlichman: Well.

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"D"**

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible) nothing like a good Christian Science streak, and I sure did have that. No, the fact is that I'm, I'm very confident that the right thing is gonna unfold here, but that I, I am concerned about your general mental approach to this, frankly.

PRESIDENT: It (unintelligible) you.

EHRlichman: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Really.

EHRlichman: And, and I think...

PRESIDENT: The point is...

EHRlichman: ...I think...

HALDEMAN: I really think, you know a lot of stuff that the world doesn't know first of all, and some of it the world will never know, some of it the world will, you don't know what and where...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: But you're in control, you're in control of a lot.

PRESIDENT: Of some (unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Yes sir, I think you are. And you've got a damn good record, and when that record comes out, you will be seen to have been doubled in the first instance, and badly served, and people will be very sympathetic. They want to believe that. And secondly, you will be seen to have moved ahead in the tradition of the young Richard Nixon as soon as you have (unintelligible) that something wasn't right. And you made the right moves as it turns out and are proximately responsible for the, for the uncovering of this thing. And they will never...

PRESIDENT: Well, I agree (unintelligible) we have to face it I think our, our talking to everybody finally triggered it.

EHRlichman: The question...

PRESIDENT: Who did it trigger? Magruder didn't trigger (Unintelligible).

EHRlichman: I suggest to you that it, that it can be argued that it did because a jumbled

telegram all over this town was saying that I was talking to people.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

EHRlichman: And, uh, the jig was up, and that...

PRESIDENT: The President was gonna get to the bottom.

EHRlichman: You were determined to open (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but uh...

HALDEMAN: The other good by it would work into the PR, and this, and this will sound odd to you, but I think there's something to it, this Judge Sirica.

EHRlichman: No question.

HALDEMAN: I would make him a good guy or else I would say, "This is a man who didn't believe this shit (unintelligible)."

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And thank God (unintelligible) the court system and the President (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Let me make the case, let me make the case. Well, as a matter of fact we can even make a point out of the fact that were were trying during this period, too, to work out a deal with, with the Senate.

EHRlichman: Sure. Absolutely.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

EHRlichman: And Ervin will be the first to say that I was fair and above board and open with him and that, that uh, Howard Hunt will say the same thing, so that, uh, your record there is impeccable. Now uh, 'it may be that what we'll want to do is just put out my verbatim notes of the, of the whole thing.

PRESIDENT: I don't know.

EHRlichman: But the point here is Dean coming in and saying, "On March 21st I told the resident there was a cancer on the Presidency, and that's what turned him on," then you'll be able to show as a matter of record that you were on this thing weeks before that, and that held been sent to uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but we were constantly asking Dean I, I, we were the ones who were saying, I said, "Jesus Christ, what about Mitchell and what about uh Haldeman?" Well...

EHRlichman: You were being had by Dean.

PRESIDENT: And uh, Dean said, "Well, this fellow, uh, I don't think this works, and this and that."

EHRlichman: Um hum. And started it up.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I know was trying to frame me, but let's face it, he, he'd say the President was trying to frame this thing in a way that (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Well, you were, look, as I said...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) how he heard that, but...

EHRlichman: You had four or five meetings with this fellow, all in a series of days. And you were saying all kinds of things to him.

HALDEMAN: You'd been with him a total of twelve hours.

EHRlichman: And when you got done with that, you said to yourself, "This is a date that doesn't ring true. This guy is not the fellow that I should rely on."

PRESIDENT: I was thinking (unintelligible)

EHRlichman: Exactly.

PRESIDENT: Well, good day. Have a nice day.

EHRlichman: Thank you. You, too.

PRESIDENT: What time--o'clock do you think we should go tomorrow?

HALDEMAN

or One o'clock or four o'clock, four thirty

EHRlichman:

PRESIDENT: Whenever you've finished (unintelligible). I think we ought to give the Capitol a shot, comment, a little shot-of energy.

EHRlichman: All right.

PRESIDENT: I'll give 'em a little pep talk.

EHRlichman: All right.

PRESIDENT: If I can.

HALDEMAN: There will be a place where you can say some things about wanting to let some freedom go through the Senate.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. And I say we're gonna get it all out but uh

EHRlichman: When the final story just comes out, there won't be anything that anyone will have to apologize for.

PRESIDENT: There's not going to be anything that we've uh, this has been something that I've been, that's been troubling, I couldn't do anything because...

EHRlichman: You couldn't say anything, but you could do a lot of things.

PRESIDENT: ...we were relying, we were relying on uh, on reports that have been made that we thought were true, and those reports are not true.

EHRlichman: Well.

PRESIDENT: Would you say that?

EHRlichman: No, I'll tell you what I'd say,

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: I'll tell you what I'd say if I were you...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

EHRlichman: ...is, is, "Gentlemen, I can't talk about this, obviously, with the proceeding going on, but I just want to assure you of one thing. You will never have to apologize for the conduct of this administration in this matter, in the administration. Now there may be individuals that we all regret

PRESIDENT: Right.

EHRlichman: "...uh, having acted the way they did. But I think when the history of this last several months is written, you will see that we have been as faithful to our trust of the American people as any, any administration could be."

PRESIDENT: Yeah, prosecute it ourselves.

EHRlichman: That's right, and then I would just leave it at that.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

EHRlichman: And then let them can go out and say, "I have the President's word." Okay?

PRESIDENT: All right. See you later.

EHRlichman: (Unintelligible)

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PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) see you, then you will call me (unintelligible).

EHRlichman: Oh, sure. You bet.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)