

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS STAFF****Tape Subject Log***(rev. 9/08)*

Transcript #1: Part of a telephone conversation between President Nixon in the Lincoln Sitting Room and John D. Ehrlichman between 7:40 pm and 7:49 pm on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 2-40#1

President: John, are you home or at the office?

Ehrlichman: No, still at the office.

President: Oh, that's too bad, too bad. Uh, with regard to this matter Bob just raised with me just before I came over to the house, with regard to the what we do on the things tomorrow, my own feeling is that we should not anticipate the trouble and, and move for legislation before, uh, something happens. I'd like to, I'd like to get it snarled up a bit and then, then move strongly. Now that's, that's just my hunch but the thing is, that last week the thing having not been handled too well I, my judgment may not be very good. I didn't really handle it last week, as you know. I, I didn't know to [unintelligible], I just assumed Mitchell and all the rest were doing it, and it wasn't too [unintelligible]. What's your hunch? What do you think?

Ehrlichman: I either, that's what --.

President: Now, uh, uh, I must say that the, that the action of Russell Long was so violent about this thing today that I think, just let these guys take a little, uh --

Ehrlichman: Yeah.

President: -- a little digging, whattya think?

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Conv. No. 2-40#1 (cont.)

Ehrlichman: They showed up, they showed up as a very raunchy outfit on the television tonight.

President: How did it come off?

Ehrlichman: Well, it, it, not very well. I --.

President: The television, of course, was trying - just a second --. [pause] I was gonna say, I bet Bob a dollar the television wouldn't show the, uh, raunchy ones.

Ehrlichman: Well, they showed some of 'em, but they softened it a good deal. They didn't, uh -

President: Yeah.

Ehrlichman: -- describe the profanity in the, in the gallery and any of that sort of thing.

President: Well, there you are. Yeah.

Ehrlichman: But, uh, did show them on the, uh, in the halls and all that sort of thing up there. Uh, uh, uh --.

President: So they came off rather well on television, huh?

Ehrlichman: I think they came off better than they should have, considering what they pulled. Uh, the, uh, we just had a meeting on this, as you, as you may know, down Bob's office --.

President: Yeah.

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Ehrlichman: Uh, I think the general conclusion that we've all come to is that we should not seek an injunction or anything of that kind at all --

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- that we should not call out troops --

President: No, God, no!

Ehrlichman: -- and that, uh, uh, we would --.

President: Don't let it, don't go [unintelligible] martial war about the war or this and --

Ehrlichman: That's right.

President: -- that. Hell, no!

Ehrlichman: Uh, we just leave this to Jerry Wilson and the Police Department to conduct their affairs in the normal way. And, uh, uh, uh, he feels that he can handle this with uniformed officers, uh, within reasonable limits, uh --.

President: They arrest people that obstruct traffic, don't they?

Ehrlichman: That's right, that's right.

President: Good.

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Ehrlichman: And, uh, they get off with a ten-dollar fine or something of that kind. Now if there's, if there's violence or anything of that sort, then you, then you respond --

President: Yeah.

Ehrlichman: -- and the chances are that the Congress would respond at that point --

President: Um-hum.

Ehrlichman: -- with a stiffer law.

President: Well, let me say this. There's no damn Congressman, Senator gonna vote against it --

Ehrlichman: That's right.

President: -- except Birch Bayh maybe.

Ehrlichman: Well, you see, these fellows will get off with a misdemeanor. Uh, it's a, uh, uh, anywhere from ten to twenty-five dollars for --

President: Yeah.

Ehrlichman: -- obstructing traffic --

President: Yeah.

Ehrlichman: -- but, uh --

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President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- uh, and that's not much of a deterrent. Matter of fact, their directions to their protestors say that they should not post bail --

President: Um-hum.

Ehrlichman: -- and that they should try and clog up the jail facilities.

President: Great.

Ehrlichman: So this gets to be a little contest as to how many jails we can find within fifty miles, you know.

President: We'll find 'em.

Ehrlichman: But we can find plenty of 'em. And, uh, uh, my feeling is that, that Jerry Wilson ought to be told that this is a police problem, we have a lot of confidence in him, and --

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- uh, that we just --

President: Exactly.

Ehrlichman: -- uh, you know --.

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President: And that we'll back him up.

Ehrlichman: Sure, and that, and that he would handle this as he would handle any similar --

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- uh, difficulty.

President: Yeah, but let's face it, it isn't as bad as Berkeley has had or San Francisco has had, yet.

Ehrlichman: I, I think that you can expect that these people will be in very massive numbers and that probably this police department'll be swamped. They will not be able to handle, uh, the numbers.

President: What do you mean "massive numbers"?

Ehrlichman: Oh, I think --

President: Thousands?

Ehrlichman: -- uh, in any, uh, one of these twenty intersections you'll have, uh, anywhere from, uh, seven hundred to, uh, a thousand, fifteen hundred, something of that kind.

President: Who's organizing this? Is this a --?

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Ehrlichman: It's a highly structured, uh, operation and, uh, it's, it's quite beautifully organized actually by, uh, Rennie Davis and a whole, a whole, uh, group of more or less professional organizers that have been at this for a long time.

President: Why did Humphrey take what had seemed to me a rather, uh, soft line in trying to clear the galleries then if it was Rennie Davis and that group, 'n' --.

Ehrlichman: I don't know. I don't know. Uh, he later went out on the lawn and talked with 'em, and they made a fool of him.

President: How'd they do that?

Ehrlichman: Well, er --.

President: It wasn't on television.

Ehrlichman: Yeah, it was. He was standing talking to 'em and some fella came up and made a "V"-sign over his head, and he looked like a rabbit, ya know, --

President: Yeah.

Ehrlichman: -- and they, they continued to do that, and they were all laughing at him behind him, and he course, he couldn't see it while he was playin' to the camera. [pause]

President: You know, it's rather, uh, i-ironic that, uh, Buckley should be the one in the chair when they cleared the --

Ehrlichman: Yeah.

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President: -- galleries --

Ehrlichman: Yeah.

President: -- of all people.

Ehrlichman: Yeah, yeah. The, uh, uh, the expecta-, of course the Senate is now out 'til Thursday. They've adjourned --

President: Oh.

Ehrlichman: -- 'til Thursday, and, uh, the expectation is that they'll bear own pretty hard on the House tomorrow.

President: Well, the House's rules are tougher.

Ehrlichman: Yeah.

President: Are, aren't they?

Ehrlichman: Well, I, I think they are. I think --

President: I think.

Ehrlichman: -- the Speaker will not brook any --

President: The Speaker --

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Ehrlichman: -- any nonsense, you know.

President: -- will show them the hell out of there.

Ehrlichman: yeah.

President: Um-hum.

Ehrlichman: But, uh, uh, that just may, uh, precipitate this thing so that by the time the Senate comes back Thursday or Friday the thing'll be, uh, uh, up to a point, you know, and the Congress'll do something.

President: Do you anticipate this sort of thing all week, John? 'Cause I'm tryin' --

Ehrlichman: Yes.

President: -- to [unintelligible] the press conference [unintelligible].

Ehrlichman: Yes, I think so. I think so.

President: I think I've got to go forward with the press conference. I think it --.

Ehrlichman: I agree. I --

President: [Unintelligible]

Ehrlichman: -- uh, matter of fact, I think it would be very opportune 'cause --

President: [Unintelligible].

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Ehrlichman: -- you get some questions about this --

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- and I --

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- think you'd, you'd get a chance to whack it.

President: Whack it hard and, uh, and not praise the other one --.

Ehrlichman: That's right.

President: [Unintelligible] they say that I think this kind of demonstration is, you know, unconscionable, and we're not gonna be affected by it.

Ehrlichman: The, uh, the question in my mind is whether you can afford to be away on Monday, because that's the first day of the obstructions when they plan to block the bridges and so forth.

President: Think I should come back?

Ehrlichman: I'm inclined to think you should. I think you should be here and that seemed to be the consensus at the meeting just now.

President: I'm all for it.

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Ehrlichman: The, uh, Dick Moore --.

President: Well, could I come back, uh, Sunday night something of that, c-come early Monday morning maybe? But, I don't have to be here all day Monday, do I? Uh -
-.

Ehrlichman: Uh, the blockage would be from seven a.m. til noon. And --.

President: And then I, then I should come back Sunday night?

Ehrlichman: Well, er, I think if you were simply to announce your itinerary about now --

President: Um-hmm.

Ehrlichman: -- so that it was obvious that you were planning to come back Monday all the time
--

President: Right.

Ehrlichman: -- then it wouldn't matter too much what time you got in on Monday.

President: Yeah. I'll be back Monday, right. That let's me, I'd like to have a couple of days off --

Ehrlichman: Sure.

President: -- in California --

Ehrlichman: Sure.

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President: -- Saturday and Sunday --

Ehrlichman: But I think if you --.

President: -- and then get on the plane Monday morning --

Ehrlichman: Right.

President: -- and be back here and get back about three or four in the afternoon --.

Ehrlichman: -- and by the time you get here, why the thing will have had its first spasm --

President: Good, I'll do it. I'll be back.

Ehrlichman: -- and we can then take a --.

President: I'd justa soon be back here. I like to be in the fight.

Ehrlichman: Well, I, I think symbolically, it, uh, particularly if you have to go to the Congress for relief, uh, you oughta be here.

President: Good, I'm delighted. I'm, uh, I couldn't agree more with it.

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Transcript #2: Part of a telephone conversation between President Nixon in the Lincoln Sitting Room and John D. Ehrlichman between 7:40 pm and 7:49 pm on April 26, 1971.

Conversation No. 2-40#2

President: What about, uh, having somebody go on at the end about this, he demonstration thing. Just let it, or is that --?

Ehrlichman: Well, uh --.

President: Are the Cabinet's likely to have silly id-[unintelligible] --?

Ehrlichman: Yeah, I'm, I'm afraid so, and' I think perhaps the only thing would be, uh, if you would tie it up at the end by simply saying that y-y-ye don't feel it's appropriate for anybody to speak out on this, that we oughta [unintelligible] maintain a position of rectitude on it and so on and just. uh. lie low.

President: I tell ya what I'd liek to do. I'll throw it to you. You make this statement.

Ehrlichman: All right.

President: Tell 'em that you have studied it through at my request as, you know, counsel and all that and that, uh, we feel it's very important now that everybody say nothing an' let us, let it be handled at this, this level.

Ehrlichman: All right.

President: And clear it with John Mitchell so he backs you up [unintelligible].

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Ehrlichman: All right, I sure will.

President: Good. That's good. Okay, John. That's fine.

Ehrlichman: Fine.

President: This is fine. We'll go back Sunday.

Ehrlichman: Very good.