

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL MATERIALS STAFF**Tape Subject Log***(rev. 10/06)*

Part of a telephone conversation between President Nixon in the Oval Office and Herbert R. Rainwater between 1:32 pm and 1:37 pm on April 23, 1971.

Conversation No. 2-37

President: I wanted to tell you, I thought you did a fine job on television last night.

Rainwater: Well, thank you, sir.

President: Yeah. And, uh, we're glad to get, uh, some of our side across, here.

Rainwater: Well, I just, uh, wish I could do more. After doing that, what else can we do now? I ju- [unintelligible].

President: Well, uh, I think, uh, I think actually, ya know, I think we are right and not, ya know, we have avoided, uh, trying to avoid, uh, getting rough on these people because I don't want to have the situation, remember the Bonus Marchers back in thirty --

Rainwater: Um-hum, we must not allow this.

President: -- and so I told, we-, that's why we have, uh, finally vacated the court order. It ends today anyway; the permit ends, so, but, uh, and, uh, but that the real problem we've got here, Chief, is the, the fact that the media, although they gave you a minute, you're about the first one they put on, but night after night they run five or six minutes of people. That=s really something, isn=t it?

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Rainwater: Yes, and for the next, uh, ten days here. I'm going to hit that every day, the overkill, here, as I get on.

President: Right.

Rainwater: [Unintelligible].

President: The fact, the fact that, the fact that, that basically they ought to present both sides.

Rainwater: Yes, I don't know why I [unintelligible] example, the five national commanders of the veterans organizations have not been invited to "Fa-Face the Nation" that those [unintelligible].

President: Right. Good. Well, you hit it. 'At's the kind of thing. Just, just, just say that, "Look, let's have equal time."

Rainwater: Well, uh, this critical hour, it's a critical time. I was reading Hanoi's, uh --

President: Um-hum.

Rainwater: -- request this morning in Paris and it dovetails in with what Hartke told me yesterday. I, uh --

President: Yeah.

Rainwater: -- went down and bearded him for forty-five minutes in his den yesterday --

President: Good. Yeah.

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

Rainwater: -- and I said, "Senator, you know that you're misleading these people with some of your statements." Uh, a reporter questioned me in my interview [clears throat] and said that you, AWill you repudiate Senator Hartke=s statement last night?≅ I said, AI don=t know what is, what is it?≅ She said, AHe said that he did not see any need for any more veterans= legislation or liberalizing it until Vietnam War end.≅

President: Yeah.

Rainwater: And I said he said that mess he's going to have one million six hundred thousand veterans down his neck and --

President: [laughs]

Rainwater: -- get him off of that committee right fast.

President: Yeah.

Rainwater: [Unintelligible]. He has us in a spot, sir. He's the --

President: Yeah.

Rainwater: -- chairman of that veterans' committee --

President: I know he has, yeah, yeah.

Rainwater: -- and here I am Monday, having to --

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

President: I know --

Rainwater: -- lunch with him --.

President: I know, I know you have to.

Rainwater: [Unintelligible]. And it's a tough, tough one for me to walk --.

President: Right. Well, let me say this, ah, we're doing the right thing here, and, uh, we're gonna come out all right. But we just have to sort o' sail through these next couple of weeks and then, uh, then --.

Rainwater: [Unintelligible] Chuck tell you of my conversation with him last night?

President: Colson?

Rainwater: Yes.

President: No, no, I haven't seen him today --.

Rainwater: I, I gave him a message, and I wanna give it to you if you have one minute.

President: Sure.

Rainwater: All right. What, Mr. President, if at-, after this is over --

President: Ahh.

Rainwater: -- this thing, uh, demonstrations is finished --

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

President: Um-hum.

Rainwater: -- [Unintelligible] sometime in the two weeks or so, you say to Hanoi, "Look, you are, keep talking about a date. Why don't you set one yourselves, and you would know --

President: [clears throat]

Rainwater: -- in your mind what it is, then and that requirement then follows that would be inventory of our prisoners, accounting for all in Laos --

President: Ahh.

Rainwater: -- held by the Viet Cong in the North and then commensurate with every fifty thousand troops that American withdraws, you send home thirty-forty prisoners. And that way, we=ll all come down together. And we will release your prisoners in the same thing.≡ I just give --

President: Right.

Rainwater: -- you, that to you --

President: Good.

Rainwater: -- as a thought.

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

- President: Good, good. I'll, I'll get it and, and, uh, cc-certainly look it over, we're lookin'.
Ya know, we, we've presented in a lot of these things, and, uh, but any time we can find a new one, we're gonna do it.
- Rainwater: Well, this puts then, then the onus on their back.
- President: Yeah.
- Rainwater: Yo', you're saying to them, "OK, you want a date now --
- President: Yeah.
- Rainwater: -- you have been kidding --
- President: Right.
- Rainwater: -- the American people. You haven't lived up to the Geneva Conference.
- President: Right.
- Rainwater: Nothing you have said have you honored including all the cease fires at the Tet" and --
- President: Right.
- Rainwater: -- and, uh, Hartke says, AOh, well,≅ to me yesterday, Aall the President has to do is tell, uh, them that he=s going to pull out on October the twenty-eighth of whatever, and then they will negotiate the prisoners of war." 'N' I said, "Well, why di--"

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

President: Negotiate it? Yeah.

Rainwater: [laughs] I said, "Why do you believe that, sir, when they haven't lived up to one single line of the --

President: Yeah.

Rainwater: -- Geneva Conference." So, I, that's, I, I searched too, everything --

President: Um huh.

Rainwater: -- for, for answers and --

President: Right.

Rainwater: -- and this one hasta --.

President: Well, you keep, uh, that's right, you keep, uh, pushing 'em in to us, Chief, and ya know, we, uh, we'll examine 'em and, uh, you'll be s' we will pop up with [unintelligible] whenever we think it'll work. -

Rainwater: Well, I know that you give these things a lot of thought and --.

President: I know, but we always like some good ideas from outside --

Rainwater: Well, --

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Conv. No. 2-37 (cont.)

President: -- and, uh, --.

Rainwater: -- think about this >n= I think --.

President: Right. I, I know. I, I will, I've just made a note on it --.

Rainwater: Okay, sir.

President: -- and I appreciate it and just, uh, keep sluggin= --.

Rainwater: Well, --

President: Okay. [laughs]

Rainwater: I am and I know you've got --

President: Uh.

Rainwater: -- a tough one.

President: Don't worry, we'll handle it.

Rainwater: Thank you.

President: Bye.