

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN
ON MARCH 22, 1973, FROM 9:11 TO 10:35 A.M.

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HALDEMAN: Well, the theory, the theory of the Ervin analysis is that what he's trying to do is go out in a blaze of glory. He wants to, he knows that he'll go down hill if he runs any more this (unintelligible). The action he was after, cheerfully is once he got interested he, he then began analyzing-

PRESIDENT: Just a little (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Precisely.

PRESIDENT: Well, uh,

HALDEMAN: Yeah. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Right. Right. Well, getting back to what we do here, uh, what, uh, what do you have in mind, uh, the eventual (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: Well, I think, we, we've gotta lay out the--

PRESIDENT: One thing is very, as I told you, is extremely important. We've gotta, we have to (unintelligible) in the sense that (unintelligible) responsibility on, a little more on Dean. He's got an office an-all that, uh, and apparently his responsibility on this-

HALDEMAN: He can't use the office for most of this. He uses them to do his other work so that he works out-they're sort of covering the base and providing the front for him so that he's -

PRESIDENT: Here's the thing, I think, I think-this concerns me, Bob. (Unintelligible) from Hunt and, uh, then, of course, we're trying to figure how we're going to cut it out. Why (unintelligible) cut it out without hurting, killing a lot of people. Have trouble (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That may be what you have to do.

PRESIDENT: Now? Well, I don't know. The point is.

HALDEMAN: Then Dean, then Dean

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...his argument is those people are going to be killed anyway,...

PRESIDENT: Well, that's the point.

HALDEMAN: ...why not kill them with a...

PRESIDENT: Dean...

HALDEMAN: ...clean bullet now?

PRESIDENT: ...Dean goes...

HALDEMAN: And leave the, leave the...

PRESIDENT: Dean goes down the line and, and, and then the line is, Oh, (unintelligible). He gets, uh, for example, it appears to me that it's, if you really want to look at the thing, it's, uh,-And he said completely the opposite. He says that he's involved. He, he-and I said why the hell, how, how, how are you involved? He said because he was aware of and participated in the obstruction of justice by reason of the fact that, uh, he was aware of the fact that they were, uh, they had a fund to take care of these various defendants. I don't believe that that is going to be something that is going to set Dean, myself, you know what I mean. That's, uh, well, when Dean ran the fund to-he didn't hand out the money. Others did.

HALDEMAN: We, John and I worked on that with him. Perhaps he thinks I'm tied into that too because of this, in a sense, my fund that he was taking.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, I, I, that's the kind of thing I'd kind of like to get...

HALDEMAN: What?

PRESIDENT: ...out of the way.

HALDEMAN: Okay, but, we're very clear on that, except this concern is what they do on the other side. What happened was that is they, they needed the money...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...They were supposed to be getting it themselves from other sources, from other Cubans and all that kind of crap...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...So, they got back to a crunch once in a while when a guy had to have another \$3,000 or something, or, or he was gonna blow, blow-

PRESIDENT: Then, who did it? Dean? That's what worries him.

HALDEMAN: No. Then what happened was, the only, see they knew over there that the only money there was that was useable was this 350,000.

PRESIDENT: Who's they, who's they?

HALDEMAN: LaRue and Mitchell.

PRESIDENT: Okay.

HALDEMAN: And so, Mitchell said, "You've got to use that money." So, I said, "Turn the whole thing back to 'em. We don't want the money anyway. Give just enough, I've been looking for a way to get rid of it." I'll admit I was, I was worried about this, this money. I wanted to get it back into the, where it belonged. Uh, so, so, he gave it back to them, and they wouldn't take, Mitchell wouldn't let them take it back, but he did say "You've got to use some of it." So Dean told Strachan, who was the guy that had the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...the physical possession to give X thousand dollars to LaRue. So, Strachan would go and open his safe, take out X thousand dollars and, and go trudging over to LaRue's, and, and this is all after the election, this is in the-

PRESIDENT: After the election?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, on the, yeah, and this in-

PRESIDENT: Oh, after the election.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. And he would go over and give LaRue

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...X thousand dollars and, and, we can certainly claim that, that Strachan had no knowledge of what that was for-he was carrying out Dean's instructions; that Dean was carrying out instructions from me; and you've gotta prove it for me. And my point there was, it's their money, give it back to 'em, give it all back to 'em. So we were giving-

PRESIDENT: The way I would, the way I was going to say about it, of course, on the money was (unintelligible). First, what was it? The money was money that was, was collected without regard to the campaign laws at all...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was in cash. It was for the purpose of taking polls and surveys, and so forth, prior to that, and so forth...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was not used .After the election, it was a surplus...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...It was turned back...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: ...Period. Right?

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Now, what happened to it after that? Do we have to account for what happened to that money after the election?

HALDEMAN: Well-

PRESIDENT: If it was used to pay campaign bills-

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Somebody has to ~ We don't have to, but the campaign has to...

PRESIDENT: Somebody has to what, now?

HALDEMAN: ...The campaign has to account for it.

PRESIDENT: But it wasn't collected in the cam-

HALDEMAN: But they still have to account for-it was, it was cash on hand at the time of the campaign. No it wasn't" 'cause they got rid of it - (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Not in the campaign, not in the camp- My point is, I would not treat that, I, that, in my view, was

HALDEMAN: (unintelligible.)

PRESIDENT: ...not campaign funds. That was campaign- that was not given for a campaign at all. These were funds that were, that were, shall we say, collected after the 1968 elections and had nothing to do with any campaign law, was not campaign funds, you know, for, for any purpose. They wanted to know-what did they poll? They polled uh, what happened to Goldwater, what happened on the meat prices-

HALDEMAN: Yes sir. Issue, issue polls.

PRESIDENT: Issue polls...

HALDEMAN: And the...

PRESIDENT: ...and the rest. The study that you made

HALDEMAN: ...geographic analysis-

PRESIDENT: ...and after that they returned it over to the Campaign Committee.

HALDEMAN: It was a gift to the Campaign Committee.

PRESIDENT: Well I don't, I don't know. Anyway, it's a problem, and that's if Dean sees that, it's a problem because the question will be asked. Dean is very good this way. You saw how the next question would be, quack, quack, quack, quack.

HALDEMAN: Well, it's a potential problem. If, if- Dean is inordinately worried about that problem because it does involve him.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Uh

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...his view, and we, this is what we were talking about, I mentioned to you last night on the phone...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...his view that, putting...

PRESIDENT: The White House-

HALDEMAN: ...the wagons around the White House. And Dean's point is, when you get down to it, the White House literally doesn't have any problem prior to the Watergate break-in. And, in other words, there was n-, there was no White House involvement in the Watergate, he's satisfied. That, that-

PRESIDENT: Even Colson?

HALDE MAN: He's satisfied with that.

PRESIDENT: He thinks that telephone call, that's the one where...

HALDEMAN: You see that's-yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...Colson has Liddy and Hunt in his office and calls Magruder and says, "Get off your ass and do something."

HALDEMAN: Well but, but, he argues that, that wasn't necessarily

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, and probably, and maybe...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...in reality, wasn't knowledge

PRESIDENT: I guess, but that-

HALDEMAN: ...of the operation.

PRESIDENT: I, I don't know-

HALDEMAN: Now, he did know there was an intelligence apparatus.

PRESIDENT: I recall, (unintelligible) the ITT thing. I can imagine Chuck and how he was. Hell, he'd go on for an hour about what he was trying to do, like that, and it wasn't like, that he was trying to get a counter- offensive. I don't know what he was trying to do.

HALDE MAN: Yeah. That's when he was playing Teddy Kennedy stuff. He was-

PRESIDENT: That's right. Damn most (unintelligible). But, uh, well, anyway, I guess that-

HALDEMAN: Dean's point is the only place that the White House is culpable.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

HALDEMAN: ...in this thing...

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

HALDEMAN: ...in any criminal basis.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...or any real basis...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...is in the potential charge of obstruction of justice after the fact-that we have no problem with the crime itself.

PRESIDENT: Right, and on that one he says, why don't we just say we turned over the money?

HALDEMAN: And I don't see why we're even, uh-it, it-so, so the money is used for sue, support stuff for defendants

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...Why is that obstruction of justice anyway?

PRESIDENT: Well, particularly when it's not to sip champagne. I wouldn't say that, I guess maybe -

HALDEMAN: You may not have to get into that at all, see. He's just worried that you might get to it. And, and if you follow his containment line, the odds...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...he feels, and, and I feel strongly on this, are pretty good you won't get into it. He's just worried that there's a little lurking some (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: Possibility (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...because somebody, well, because Hugh Sloan knows that the money was delivered here. That's really where it, what it boils down to.

PRESIDENT: Hugh Sloan knows it.

HALDEMAN: Or if you put Gordon Strachan...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...up before a Grand Jury...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...if they ask the right question... Gordon will never volunteer. He's a lawyer and he's...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...smart...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, he'll pull-

PRESIDENT: But he must not, he must not perjure himself.

HALDEMAN: ...But, if you get Gordon to a point where they say, "Was there any money?".

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...somehow

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...he may, they may get him into where-

PRESIDENT: But this had already been, some .had been used yet, is it our money (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: No. Well, yeah, but never a fund over here...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...only that there - that Stans had this fund in his, in his safe, which he did, which, of course, he would have. He had a cash fund in his, in his safe. It was used for, for various payments and that's where-

PRESIDENT: As far as this is concerned, this is, is, I'd, I'd say constructively that Stans is clean. Now, to go on to, did you ever sign any (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't know. I didn't, I never saw him. I never had a thing to do with the situation.

PRESIDENT: There was nothing in writing involved in it.

HALDEMAN: Well, Strachan may have had to sign a receipt when he took (unintelligible) uh, -

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, what it was was that money

PRESIDENT: I know.

HALDEMAN: ...that we had left over from '70, 'member we collected all our cash in '70...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: ...And, we told 'em not to spend all of it if they didn't have to. We ended up, we had a-and it was probably '68 surplus that we used in '70 and carried over...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...(Unintelligible) of course.

PRESIDENT: Why don't we just say on this money

HALDEMAN: The money (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...Kalmbach's money (unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) Kalmbach.

PRESIDENT: ...was to be used, this was to be used for various candidates but was never used.

HALDEMAN: It was to be used for candidate support and research.

PRESIDENT: For candidate support and research. It was never used, turned over to the Committee at the end of the campaign. What they did with it is their problem.

HALDEMAN: That had been collected in years prior to 1971.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Very simple.

HALDEMAN: Which is true, also. At least that was my understanding of that. Now, the problem is that, I think those funds got mixed together and we never got all the money.

PRESIDENT: Really?

HALDEMAN: 'Cause they told us we couldn't

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: ...make a (unintelligible). Uh-

PRESIDENT: They didn't use what they thought they did. Anyway, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) they thought they needed it. It was their point that under the laws there was no way we could, we could use it-which they were right.

PRESIDENT: Which we never did.

HALDEMAN: There really wasn't. There wasn't even a way we could use what we had.

PRESIDENT: What you, what you mean is that you didn't do a thing with the money, which is good.

HALDEMAN: See, I had the money, I was going to use it to pay for polls (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) you did the polling through, uh,-

HALDEMAN: ...but they said they had the money to pay for it and they needed, they needed places to show where they spend money, so they, so they paid for the bills.

PRESIDENT: I would say that looking at the, at the reed thing, now-Ehrlichman, for example, uh, he gets to him, uh,-

HALDEMAN: Not on Watergate.

PRESIDENT: No, but he gets to him on the, uh, on the, uh, Hunt, if Hunt, with Hunt's, uh,-

HALDEMAN: But John doesn't think it does. It gets to Krogh.

PRESIDENT: Well, that bothers me.

HALDEMAN: It, and it clearly does, then it gets to David Young, and David Young is a weaker reed than Krogh.

PRESIDENT: H-H-Has Young, uh, also lied? They both-

HALDEMAN: Well, they haven't gotten to Young yet, I don't think. I shouldn't say that 'cause I don't know, I don't know.

PRESIDENT: But, what were Young and...

HALDEMAN: It's my impression that they.

PRESIDENT: ...what were Young and-Krogh didn't, Krogh hit a critical question in his case, apparently, said he didn't know the Cubans (unintelligible). Now how does he get out of that? Has anybody thought of that?

HALDEMAN: Well, Ehrlich-, Ehrlichman's view on it is- which kind of surprises me- is to be cold-blooded. Yesterday he said, "When Krogh gets finished with his lying-" he said, "Now I (unintelligible)" They said they know Krogh.

PRESIDENT: It's a convicted felon against his word.

HALDEMAN: Well, plus, they may not say anything. You, you still-the Cubans seem to be the least matter of concern. They're, they're fanatics and they don't seem to really be too concerned about their pulling the load and their needs are, are fairly minimal, and Dean confirms again that Liddy, Liddy is enjoying, Liddy's in jail, he, he didn't

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...stay out, he, he said, "I want to start serving my term," and he's at, at, uh, Danbury and thoroughly enjoying it. He's a little strange.

PRESIDENT: That son-of-a-bitch of a judge gave him 35 years -

HALDEMAN: He may enjoy that. As long as he thinks we're gonna deal something up for him someday when he - it's incredibly- He's got five kids, and all he's concerned about is that there's enough income to take care of his kids and that's being taken care of right now by his father. And his lawyer's got something worked out.

PRESIDENT: God damn it, the people are in jail, it's only right for people to raise the money for them. I got to let them do that and that's all there is to it. I think we ought to. There's got to be funds. I'm not being, I don't mean to be blackmailed by Hunt, that goes too far, but we're taking care of these people that are in jail. My God, they did this for-we're sorry for them. We do it out of compassion and I didn't (unintelligible) the Cuban fund and the people that contribute to it didn't have to report on that damn thing. There's no report requirement or any kind of require- meet. You don't agree? What else should we do?

HALDEMAN: That's why I-it seems to me that there's no real problem on obstruction of justice as far as Dean's concerned, I mean-it, it doesn't seem to me that we are obstructing justice, for Christ sake. The people-

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...pled guilty...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...when a guy goes and pleads guilty, are you obstructing justice?

PRESIDENT: When you help his-

HALDEMAN: His argument is, when you read the law, that the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...that, uh-

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but, Dean didn't do it. Dean, I don't think, I don't think Dean had anything to do with, uh, the obstruction. He didn't deliver the money or, that's the point. I think what really set him off was when, uh, Hunt's lawyer was off at this party and said Hunt needs a \$120,000. Well, that was, that was a very, that was a, that was a shot across the bow. You understand, that that would have constituted God-damn blackmail if Dean had gotten the money and never-You see what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Let's come-to the other... We, when you talk about the wagons around the White House, Bob, what, what really happens here is that, uh, we really have to take a hard look at the situation and realize that, (unintelligible). I don't think that we can, uh-has anybody candidly suggested that Magruder was not aware (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't think so. I don't, I don't, I don't know, but I, I have, my opin- I have no knowledge, my opinion is that he knew...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...And, uh, from the way he talks I'm, I'm thoroughly convinced of that. Dean is thoroughly convinced that he knew.

PRESIDENT: Always pull through. (Tape noise) It's Magruder's word against the others and he said he didn't.

HALDEMAN: Well, nobody said he did.

PRESIDENT: Well, did he (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh, yeah, but not-they haven't testified (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Speaking now, speaking now of what Dean tells me-yes, that's what I'm going to do this afternoon-and, and Dean tells me things have gotten out of control; and he says well (unintelligible) and asked him how Magruder was doing and Dean said Magruder perjured himself. Well, it's pretty rough. I'd say well, with that knowledge can I appoint Magruder to a position in government? That's the problem, you see (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You didn't appoint him to a position in the White House.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I hired him out. I'd say...

HALDE MAN That's exactly why we didn't let him get into anything that was a Presidential appointment. And you can also argue that we should have told the Secretary of Commerce. On the other hand, we don't, we can't prove he perjured himself, that's Dean's opinion.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, Magruder, anyway, that's, we went that route for exactly that reason.

PRESIDENT: No. No. We didn't.

HALDE MAN: But, the other side of that coin is, if you're-unless you decide to throw Magruder to the wolves, you need to keep Magruder on as even a keel as you can. If you decide to throw him to the wolves, uh, (unintelligible) kind of problem, he's not a guy, he's not a Liddy type. He's exactly the opposite.

PRESIDENT: If you decided to throw him to the wolves, what does that (unintelligible)? You wouldn't say anything (unintelligible) . I mean, the point is, the point is we say that we have found that Magruder (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: No. We don't have anybody who can even testify on Watergate, 'cause we don't have anybody who knows anything about it.

PRESIDENT: Except possibly Colson, and that's just a big possibility, possible. Yet, I don't, I don't. I don't agree that nobody else would know. Strachan?

HALDEMAN: Well, that's right. Keep forgetting about Strachan. And Gord-uh, what's his name, Dean says he's going to (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: What we do with getting information in sort of a-he may not have known about how we're-you know what I mean. I think Strachan is, is not that bad if his fish is gonna get fried. He's at too low a level. -

HALDEMAN: That's a good sign, I know it.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) he got a tremendous amount of- he just got information but he didn't issue orders or anything on what he wanted to do.

HALDEMAN: Right. You look at Gordon Strachan. Here's a little, young lawyer, who used to work for John Mitchell in his law firm, and came- down to Washington to work in the government, and he's working under a campaign with Attorney General of the United States is in charge of it. Now, how the hell do you expect him to decide whether something that's being done is right or wrong?

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: I don't know, I don't think,- Gordon doesn't I don't think, doesn't worry Dean much and he doesn't worry, I don't, I would not be concerned about Gordon. He is-

PRESIDENT: A hell of a guy.

HALDEMAN: You never know about anybody. You know, I would have never thought that Navy aide would have a nervous breakdown.

PRESIDENT: Didn't you? (Unintelligible) can sure be wrong in picking people that-

HALDEMAN: Uh, Gordon is a guy I wouldn't worry about. But, Magruder is a guy I would. Because Magruder is loaded with ego, personal pride, political ambition, uh,...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...I make it this way: He's had some major success as a young guy, he's, you know, a, a boy wonder...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...and, uh, that kind of guy is, uh-,

PRESIDENT: How does John answer the Ellsberg thing? That's the other point I wanted to raise, that, uh, John seems to say well,-

HALDEMAN: He says, "I didn't know anything about it." He, he says, "I didn't think they, I-"

PRESIDENT: Talked about the (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: No, he didn't. He says he didn't find out about that.

PRESIDENT: Krogh, Krogh did. But, what, what was, what were we doing at that meeting (unintelligible) is the whole point (unintelligible)? I'm rather curious to know myself.

HALDEMAN: Well, you better ask John, 'cause I don't really know. All I know is-

PRESIDENT: All I know is that, I think it was part of that whole operation of John and Young, where we were just looking into the whole business of leaks. Henry was in on that. Henry must be aware of some of that. I've got to-

HALDEMAN: What they-the enterprise out of there, which is the key thing-that, that Hunt, you see, Hunt-, what Hunt says is that he'll uncover some of the sleazy work he did for Ehrlichman. He said particularly remind him of the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...of the...

PRESIDENT: That's Ellsberg's affair. That's what Dean told me.

HALDEMAN: Alright, and the Ellsberg affair-

PRESIDENT: Yeah, what happened?

HALDEMAN: I'm not sure what happened, but it has something to do with they sent Hunt out, and I guess the Cubans

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...to break in...

PRESIDENT: To a doctor's office.

HALDEMAN: ...to a psychiatrist's office to get a report...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...on Ellsberg's mental analysis or something like that, and they bungled, bungled the break-in. They didn't get what they were supposed to get or something, and then they came back and said could they go back again and that request got to Ehrlichman, and he said, "Absolutely not," he says. And they didn't, apparently. That's-

PRESIDENT: Why did they want a report on (unintelligible)?

HALDEMAN: I don't know, but they had-there was a lot of stuff. They had a lot of interesting stuff on Ellsberg that showed he was, that was-we got some of it.

PRESIDENT: What was the purpose of it though? I mean, to discredit-7

HALDEMAN: I forgot-Yes. (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) make a spy out of him, and, uh...

PRESIDENT: Oh, I see.

HALDEMAN: Uh, uh-

PRESIDENT: Did, did, uh, it make him look as bad after all that national security was involved and so forth?

HALDEMAN: Well...

PRESIDENT: I'm not sure I (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: And why were we using private people? Because the question, there was a valid, or, a real question here as to where the CIA and the FBI fit into it.

PRESIDENT: Also, whether they were leaking-

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) because things were leaking from all over.

PRESIDENT: They were leaking from all over and somebody had to find a way

HALDEMAN: And it had to be done independently.

PRESIDENT: It had to be done independently because of possibility of, uh, leakage.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: I don't know whether that'll hold up. (Unintelligible) that doesn't make it legal

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) again. If you come back, why
-

HALDEMAN: That's a long stretched out (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I'm trying to get down to the end of the point,
that the man who knows all this is Hunt

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: So, Hunt becomes rather important.

HALDEMAN: Probably.

PRESIDENT: And Dean's line, Bob, if we want-

HALDEMAN: Dean's point on that one is that-

PRESIDENT: Dean would say that he'd just cut that off
(unintelligible). That's what you really come
down to. Or you, you give him \$120,000 or at
least give him another contact, you know what I
mean? That's, that's a lot of dough. Let's
face it, in terms, uh, in terms, uh, of pardon,
uh, or so forth, if, if Colson is talking, uh,
of a pardon, uh, Christmas, you know, right
after the fact that the court, that they're
convicted, or either before they're sentenced-
he's out of his mind. He knows we can't do
that.

HALDEMAN: But if Hunt thinks that's what he's been
promised...

PRESIDENT: He'll shut up now.

HALDEMAN: He'll, he may shut up now.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but my point is-

HALDEMAN: But, what, what do you do at Christmas time?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's right. And the question is, the question is that now, it seems to me you'd better find out from Colson what he did promise. (Unintelligible) Don't you think so?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But you've got to go about that before he's sentenced. (tape noise) a pardon. Well, what that would be a -

HALDEMAN: But not if you get the Parole Board to, uh- A pardon might be, an early pardon, an early parole might not, if you get the Parole Board to

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...look at the point that the sentence was, was, uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...way out of proportion to the, to the-

PRESIDENT: Well, the point is that-Dean says that, that's why he's thinking of using Petersen. He says that, and Ehrlichman agrees, that the judge has the power to sentence him without parole, and that's a rough son-of-a-bitch, it seems to me for something like this, on the ground that they didn't talk about it, you see. Might make it tough to, to pardon him. I think it would be curtains for him for that (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: But the point, the moral of it is that he doesn't - we don't know what Sirica's gonna (unintelligible). Again, Dean looks at the, what might be the worst. It may not be the worst.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: (Laughter) In fact what usually happens is something beyond what you thought was the worst.

PRESIDENT: Well, on the wagons theory, uh, what, what, what does that mean, I wonder, to put the wagons up around the White House. I mean that- who do you let down the tube? Do you let Magruder down?

HALDEMAN: You don't intentionally, you leave Magruder- what you do is, is you, see, we're, we're doing stuff now. We're keeping quiet and, and, uh, all that...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...just try and cov-and, and putting up this money and, and everything else. We're trying to keep-when you get right down to it, as Dean says-the only White House guilt, culpability, is in the cover-up...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and what, what's the purpose of the cover-up, to protect the White House? No, it protects some individuals of the Committee.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell, Magruder.

HALDEMAN: And the question then is how, what individuals, how far up does it go, that you're protecting? And we've already, we're not protecting Liddy, so we, we (unintelligible) so, we got to talk to him. Uh, the question is, can it, can, if you, you could-his idea is you separate, you look at the Committee as one thing, the White House as another.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: The White House has no guilt in the Watergate thing.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: So, you come up with wagons around the White House, and you just, you just turn it up, you, you do whatever you do, issue

HALDEMAN: statements, issue a new statement, well,
(CONT.) well, whatever, to totally cut off the White House from the, from the, the whole Watergate business. Now, at the same time you do that, it might be, we haven't gotten to this, but, it might be, you also have to do the Segretti thing and, to a degree, implicate the White House, which is...

PRESIDENT: That's

HALDEMAN: ...fine. There must be a decent statement (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I, I don't, uh, I don't know how you feel about that.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...or a statement, or a-

HALDEMAN: There has to be something. That's right.

PRESIDENT: Or do you agree?

HALDEMAN: Uh, no, I think you do, I think they do.

PRESIDENT: I think we need, uh, I mean, let me say, let me put it, I have a certain balance (unintelligible) that Dean's statement, or the Moore's statement, or what have you, sure will (unintelligible) and so forth, but it's better to have something rather than nothing. You know what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Well, but then the questions that that raises are- they can successfully do that, but, can you, are you any better off if the White House is clean but your Campaign Committee's dirty, or if, if, if we cut the whole thing off.

PRESIDENT: That's not what I was referring to.

HALDEMAN: In other words, we need (unintelligible) the Campaign Committee and (unintelligible) the White House. First of all is that believable? Uh, happens to be true, but can it be convincing? Uh, uh-

PRESIDENT: Well, that, well, they, what you're -

HALDEMAN: And Dean-if they get, if they get as high as Magruder, probably it doesn't hurt too much. If they get to Mitchell

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...uh, he's awfully close to you.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: He's not as close to you as Ehrlichman and, I guess, that Dean and Haldeman now, which (unintelligible). Mitchell will find a way out. You have to let them get to him, I think. But, Dean's thought, I think what convinced him to put the wagons around the White House is that it forces Mitchell to take the responsibility rather than allowing Mitchell to hide under the blanket of the White House, which he's been doing, and I think Dean feels that that's - And, and in a way, it does Colson too, uh, who's out. He feels that, that Mitchell and Colson can take care of themselves.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I don't know. But the, the, the problem is Magruder can't take care of himself, except with this straight line- his, his present, uh, position. . .

PRESIDENT: Yep.

HALDEMAN: ...and see whether he can, can make it stick. Now, they may be able to hang him on that

PRESIDENT: They'll kill him.

HALDEMAN: ...but still, it will get to, to a question. They may be able to indict him if they get other people to talk, but can they, can they-

PRESIDENT: They'll convict him.

HALDEMAN: ...beyond a reasonable doubt? Maybe not, if, if he stays with his line, they may not be able to convict him. Then Magruder indicted and winning, uh, acquittal, may be a pretty good route for us to go. We won't know unless we try. And they're, what'll you do if they call us? We can't not go there again. And if I were the prosecutor, well, that decision, it's the Justice Department that prosecutes that, so maybe we can control the prosecution and not call 'em.

PRESIDENT: Well

HALDEMAN: But there again, at least if you call us, we're under rules of evidence and, and

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...oh, and germaneness.

PRESIDENT: You've got lawyers who object, you can go to relevancy there.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, and they can only

PRESIDENT: Go to relevancy, that's no problem there.

HALDEMAN: So they can't go fishing. And there is no problem, unless they get to Strachan and maybe start running that stream.

PRESIDENT: Another thought that has been raised is the idea that (unintelligible) things going wrong (unintelligible) a Special Counselor.

HALDEMAN: I don't know, not, not being a lawyer, I (unintelligible) this kind of stuff, but, uh, Dean feels very strongly, and John Ehrlichman seems to concur, that it would, that we do need the advice of somebody who knows more about the criminal set-up than we do...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and they-

PRESIDENT: We, can't go to Petersen-

HALDEMAN: Well, they don't know Petersen's the guy. They wonder if, you know, what we got into last night after we were in here, was the question of whether, I guess it was Dean, could call Petersen and just say we need advice. Can I talk to you on a, on a totally confidential basis, outside of school, and it will (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: You wouldn't do that, uh, through Kleindienst?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Kleindienst wouldn't (unintelligible) after you told him? I'm just, just asking.

HALDEMAN: I don't know. That, that, the way that we were talking, it's going...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...to have to either be, uh...

PRESIDENT: Right. Okay.

HALDEMAN: ...just straight bilateral

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...Dean to Petersen

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...or Dean would just say I'm over, I'm over my head on this...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and, uh, I need counsel on an informal and totally confidential basis. Will you sit down and let me go through this with you? But it'd have, would have to be understood and it might-I recognize that you may be-can't do it because as the head of the Criminal Division it puts you on the other side. It can't be separated. Dean has the feeling that the more Petersen knows, the more helpful he can be, and that he will be.

PRESIDENT: I'm not sure that that's what you can count on.

HALDEMAN: I'm sure you can't count on it, because Petersen's another human being, too.

PRESIDENT: And he's a knowledgeable man. (Unintelligible) you stuck somebody (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: But you don't know what his ambitions are and, uh-

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) and I just don't know.

HALDEMAN: Well, I know they're all possibilities, but apparently, all the way through this he's been a very solid rock.

PRESIDENT: (unintelligible) - problems?

HALDEMAN: The problem you got with Petersen is that he wants to go out in private practice with Kleindienst.

PRESIDENT: Well, I'd sooner take (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And if you didn't

PRESIDENT: What are you (unintelligible), tell Kleindienst too?

HALDEMAN: I don't think that, if you're going to do this, you can't do it without Kleindienst knowing.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: And I think here you just gotta (Unintelligible).

REEL TWO BEGINS

PRESIDENT: Unintelligible). I, I, I'll just call him and say (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...Well, he used to, and I assume that that (Unintelligible) same ones, I think.

PRESIDENT: Does Dean have his report from Sullivan?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

END OF REEL ONE

HALDEMAN: Uh, uh, he does.

PRESIDENT: Not very good?

HALDEMAN: Oh, it's gotta-it's some of mostly the same old stuff. It's the Anderson and all, uh, crap, and, uh, uh-da, well there is, there's one thing that we could build up that would, that I think we could get built up that would be pretty good, which is about the extensive use of the FBI in the 1960, or 4, Democratic Convention and an attempt to use them in '68. There is also some cover-up on Walter Jenkins, and some instructions by Johnson to the FBI as to what they were to find when they were making this investigation and, uh-uh, I don't think we can use that, I mean, it isn't, that isn't--