

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING AMONG
THE PRESIDENT, H.R. HALDEMAN, AND JOHN DEAN,
THE OVAL OFFICE, ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1972, FROM
5:27 P.M. TO 6:17 P.M. SECOND INSTALLMENT

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INSTALLMENT

PRESIDENT: I'll look forward to the time that we have
the entrance to the Department of Justice
and IRS totally under our control after
(unintelligible) then we can do so...

DEAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...you can't screw her up because, I mean,
the idea that you horse around, ah, with the
IRS, my God, ah, even when I was, ah, when I
was running for Governor, of course in '68
(unintelligible) they, they pulled my file
and I had nothing, of course, to tax, all
the time.

HALDEMAN: Ym hum.

DEAN: It was then the (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You know...

PRESIDENT: How come we never pulled Mc Govern's uh,
file on this, uh, on this uh tax...

DEAN: I had tremendous time trying to get Killen's
(phonetic) file.

PRESIDENT: Well, God damn, yeah, I guess...
(More than one person talks, unintelligible)

DEAN: (Unintelligible). Don't be surprised if
George Schultz comes to see you in the next
few days `cause I made a request of Johnnie
Walters

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Ah, after some...

HALDEMAN: On what grounds, you mean George doesn't
want him? Let 'em tee me off, throw him out
of the office. No really, here, ah, here,
Dean's in control (unintelligible) came up
and saw (unintelligible)

DEAN: (Unintelligible) what's wrong now, it's another matter. I've been talking to Murray Chotiner whose been collecting this (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Whoever it is, Schultz is to see that any order or list that he gets comes directly. Now that`s, it's, be sure it's done. Now, I don't want George Schultz ever raising a question. Right, uh, he's put in his limit. He should be thrown right out of the office. I think, I think could put him over there. He didn't', he didn't get Secretary of Treasur because he's got nice blue eyes and not for any other reason.

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DEAN: The problem is...

PRESIDENT: He's gonna start repaying.

DEAN: ...the problem is this. There are so damn many Democrats down...

PRESIDENT: Of course there...

DEAN: ...but it would have to be an artful job to go down and get that file.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Why the Commissioner and Secretary can't figure out, how they can't get down in there and get them despite the fact that there...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: ...are some bureaucrats down there. I don't know. That's what I haven't ever been told the answer to. And we've been round and round on this for, for at least the two years I've been over here.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Well after the election...
(Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Why in the devil (unintelligible) I'd let the Democrats stand there and squeal, I mean just "Well, we've had as a result of the election campaign we've had a lot of complaints and we've gotta check these things out, and, we just do it." But before that, we, we do have to do it artfully.

PRESIDENT: We have to do it artfully so that we don't create an issue by abusing the IRS politically.

UNIDENTIFIED: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And, there are ways to do it. God damn it, sneak in in the middle of the night...

DEAN: We had a man, we had a man who could do it and was doing it for me.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, and they threw him out.

DEAN: No, we, we've appointed him to a higher post. He is now the Commissioner of Customs. Mike Acree. Mike was very good. He could get down there and get me any information I needed. I didn't have to go through Walters or anyone else.

HALDEMAN: Why the hell did we promote him?

DEAN: He's a good man. (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: That's a hell of a loss though.

DEAN: That's right, it is. And Mike has lost his former ability to use other people over there now because it becomes very blatant...

HALDEMAN: Ah, it actually, the way things are now it doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference whether we get 'em before or after the election anyway.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And we sure shouldn't take the risk of getting us blown out of the water before the election.

DEAN: Ab..absolutely. (Unintelligible),

HALDEMAN: We should keep, we should find a way...

DEAN: Keep 'em worried.

HALDEMAN: ...But after the election I think s-so, so let em, let the Democrats down there squeal and say Nixon's pulling the tax files of all the Democrats. You see, it's damn right because we're worried about being charged with covering up tax problems...

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: ...and we're going to get...

PRESIDENT: They're the ones who've been talking about loopholes.

HALDEHAN: ..we've been having a lot a complaints and we're going to check 'em out.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Let the (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Let em find out about loopholes, right? (More than one person talks, unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Let em scream the about repression and, and all that stuff.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: We just, we just got to not worry about it.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Oh, and it's just a Washington issue anyway.

HALDEMAN: It sure is.

PRESIDENT: Go right after it, go after it and say "Well, we want to check these loopholes, we're worried about..."

DEAN: The other thing is you could always increase your compliance program at that point. That compliance program has never been fully implemented...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: ...just happens that a lot of Democrats get caught, get caught in the new compliance program.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: We'll pull, we'll pull a lot of Republicans too and just don't look at those after we pull em.

PRESIDENT: What will we pick for Republicans, for Christ sakes. What a nut...(unintelligible) ah, just do as you say. We'll boy, just, we're just gonna do it...

HALDEMAN: We're pulling Republicans out for Christ sake as Connally points out, we have no qualms about investigating Billy Graham...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Dr. Ryland and all these people, you know. It's

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEHAN: It's uh...

PRESIDENT: Sure. Well they're gonna get it sure we've just got, we've got to do it, even if we've got to kick Walters' ass out first and get a man in there.

HALDEMAN: I think that's right, isn't it?

DEAN: Johnnie has been a, a disappointment...

PRESIDENT: Well he's going to get out.
(Unintelligible)

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PRESIDENT: He's finished, he's finished November the eighth believe me. Out.

DEAN: I don't, there's not a, a dime's worth of difference between Randy Thrower and, and Johnnie Walters...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

DEAN: ...as far as response to the White House.

HALDEMAN: We've just got to get a guy with guts in there, don't we.

DEAN: He's a nice guy but he sure just can't get what we need. Except, except...

PRESIDENT: For one thing the only one for the appointment. (Unintelligible) He must have more (unintelligible)...

DEAN: There are some, there are some, not Presidential appointments, but there are secretarial, Secretary of Treasury has a number of appointments as well as the...

HALDEMAN: At his pleasure?

DEAN: At his pleasure, right.

PRESIDENT: Well, can the Secretary of the Treasury get ahold of Schultz now? Schultz has to know.

UNIDENTIFIED: No.

PRESIDENT: He's got to know that the resignations of everybody--The point is, I want there to be no hold-overs left. The whole God damn bunch go out. And if he doesn't do it, he's out as Secretary to the Treasury. And that's the way it's going to be played. Now, that's the point. See. Now we, they always get around this thing you know, the White House can't appoint. Well, God damn it, the Secretary, those jobs. We're not going to have a Secretary to the Treasury who doesn't do what we say. Absolutely, every God damn one and George doesn't want em out (coughs) that's too damn bad.

HALDEMAN: Well that's just the point...

PRESIDENT: It's going to be a rough game.

HALDEMAN: ...that's the point where George, you know, if anybody gets upset and says well "By God, I'm going to leave and pull the string on you" you know and say this is why I'm leaving. Let 'em, do it.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Let em go out and say the White House forced him out because he...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...wouldn't give names to people, or...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...something.

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

DEAN: Now I would

HALDEMAN: We've got to have a different attitude.

DEAN: ...that they're done quickly because it seems sometimes when we, we wait on these things...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: ...ah, we get locked in...

HALDEMAN: Check.

DEAN: ...and they don't happen.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: Well, the excuse of waiting was that, that we, you know, we don't have a guy to fill it. That doesn't make any difference either now. We can leave it empty.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: We can leave the whole God damn government empty

PRESIDENT: And we're going to...

HALDEMAN: ...and it wouldn't hurt the world one bit.

PRESIDENT: That's (unintelligible) including the Embassies, everything else, just out they go, the State Department...

HALDEMAN: Let (unintelligible) run 'em for awhile.

PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right. They all go.

DEAN: That's an exciting concept.

HALDEMAN: Oh, it sure is. (Laughter) Look and it's, they, they will set this country, it'll be so positive...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...that this country will say "My God, finally..."

PRESIDENT: "Finally somebody is cleaning house."

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

HALDEMAN: Clean enough they can't zero in on any one of them and say "You've been political" or...

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah well...

HALDEMAN: ...something like that.

PRESIDENT: the point is we've got to really, it's got to be a plan. I don't have, I have an uneasy feeling there's no plan developed. I talked to Ehrlichman about it but he's so busy with other things, but the whole plan, has got to be a concerted plan to find out not only who the President appoints, but who every God damn cabinet officer appoints, and every damned agency head appoints...

HALDEMAN: We have that...

PRESIDENT: ...up and down the line. Did you know about the fact that Treasury, ah, the...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...(unintelligible) Treasury has at his pleasure...

HALDEMAN: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: ...well God damn him then. Why didn't he do something about it. He hasn't done a thing about. We've never -Connally...

HALDEMAN: Remember Connally...

PRESIDENT: Connally didn't do anything. He didn't make any changes.

HALDEMAN: He did some but Connally tread awful lightly over there.

PRESIDENT: I know. He felt probably he'd have to. But George doesn't have to tread lightly.

HALDEMAN: But we forced, now we forced Johnnie Walters on Connally. He didn't want Walters and we, we forced him because Mitchell said he was the guy who would cooperate.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell didn't know. Mitchell's a poor (unintelligible)

DEAN: The point is, you know there was no doubt that Walters would be cooperative. What's happened though, it happens in so many things is, that a person who appears to be loyal (unintelligible) gets out and is captured immediately by the Bureaucracy, then when you see it...

DEAN: That's why we gotta lecture each of these guys about...

ALL: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: ...captured by the Bureaucracy.

DEAN: Well, I know, I was over there when...

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PRESIDENT: Mitchell was captured by the Bureaucracy. Mitchell was told quote get over there and help me, ah, break some of these guys, they're not even worth, they're not worth a damn because I've known them for years Roger, Rogers was totally captured by the American Bureaucracy, Mel Laird, he didn't changed anybody, he didn't change anybody. You know what I mean.

DEAN: He put some of his people...

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Oh on the a top level, but, ah, the people now who run the Pentagon are still running the God damn Pentagon.

HALDEMAN: Sure they are.

PRESIDENT: That's what ah...

HALDEMAN: The military is still riding roughshod over them.

PRESIDENT: HEW, the whole damn bunch, and you see this is the problem I know it has happened around here. They all come in and they, and' the difficulty is you've gotta do it fast because then they'll take off for Christmas you know, then after the first of the year it's too late. You've got to do it right after the election. You've got one week and that's the time to get all those resignations in and say look I want you to be able to plan your holidays now. You're out, you're out, you're finished, you're done, done, finished. Knock the hell out of there.

DEAN: I suppose one of the problems when, when we came in is that no one knew all of the key sensitive spots. In general they did, but when you get out in each of these departments now, you know, you know, a key administrative appointment can influence the whole operation...

HALDEHAN: Well, Price told us that before we came in, now, he, and basically he did go back to it and it's still right. But you get the right guy...

PRESIDENT: ...the general counsel...

HALDEMAN: ...as the general counsel...

PRESIDENT: ...the P.R. guy...

HALDEMAN: ...the P.R. guy...

PRESIDENT: ...the pers-

HALDEMAN: ...the personnel guy, the legislative liaison guy and he had one other. The administrative...

PRESIDENT: My point is, my point is, that we, that's exactly what we have to do, though I know that Malek is busy over at the committee, the point is we've got to get the names ready now.

DEAN: We are.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) is working full time on that.

PRESIDENT: He's getting the names?

HALDEMAN: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: All right.

DEAN: ...and reviewing them with each member of the staff that's had any relations with these departments and can say (unintelligible) strong or weak...

HALDEMAN: It's a project, it's just going on full tilt that nobody knows anything about and shouldn't...

PRESIDENT: ...been through all the departments and you're not missing the agencies too. Let's remember the VA, any God damn.thing. Clean those bastards on...

HALDEMAN: GSA, everything else.

PRESIDENT: GSA clean them out.

HALDEMAN: Well, we've got some of em, we got pretty good, you know?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Now on that, take that Park Service,

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But he cuts us politically and we don't want that to happen. That's the thing that I've really been trying to get across to him. They don't get it around here.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: They really don't. It's going to be hard because some of the gad-about, well they're going to have to go too. Well, they...

HALDEMAN: Well, we have, we've all worried about our press. You know, that we don't want to look like the White House is screwing things up and all that...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...but now, let the stories get out, and they will. You'll see a huge rash of stories this fall about the ruthless White House Staff, referring to these dirty bastards that are undercutting the whole U.S. Government.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: And that you are prepared to ride through a few weeks of those...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: You'll end up with one hell of a government.

DEAN: The American people love it.

(Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: The American people would shout right on, all the way, boy.

PRESIDENT: That's right. I suggest that we're going to have a house cleaning. It's time for a new team. Period. We, we, we didn't do it when we came in before, but now we have a mandate, I'm going to say "And one of the, the, mandates is to do the cleaning up that we didn't do in '68..."

HALDEMAN: And we can be nice about it, it's no reflection on anybody, it's just that the, the time has come for...

DEAN: New leadership?

HALDEMAN: ...new leadership.

PRESIDENT: They've had their jobs long enough. We didn't appoint em. Say this is gotta include some of our own...

HALDEMAN: I was just gonna say --, don't say we didn't appoint people because it's some of our own people...

PRESIDENT: A lot of our own people come in here and they start sucking around the Georgetown set, all of a sudden they're just as bad as the others.

HALDEMAN: On the others, at least we know our enemies, some of our own, we think are our ow-n, but they're worse than...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...the enemy because they just don't do any...

PRESIDENT: They're disgusting.

HALDEMAN: Well, they don't hurt us but they don't help us.

DEAN: I think just watching a case like this thing I've been on you, you learn an awful lot about people when you see the crunch come down.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Unintelligible)

DEAN: You learn an awful lot about people.

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PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah.

DEAN: Some surprises and some pleasant surprises
 on both sides

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well