



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Saturday, December 19.

The President kept himself busy this morning, which helped to give a little time to get some work done. He went out to the hospital to see Senator Russell, who probably will die in the next few days, so this was what the President considers to be his last visit with him. He was very much impressed again with how powerful a man he is, and how much more impressive he is than our Northern Senators. He mused quite a bit when he got back about the fact that patriotism is so much higher in the South.

He also got back on the program for last night and he felt that we have to do a better job of controlling the content of programs, so that we don't get the kind of stuff that can be offensive or the kind of far-out art and music that he doesn't like and doesn't want to be a part of promoting or sponsoring. We got back again on the Communications Director question. And, he feels more strongly than he did yesterday that we've got to move on it.

During our chat he had Colson in for a while, who reported on the Teddy Kennedy question. He's getting the pictures distributed and maintaining the effort on that; also Chuck's following up on the knockdown of the press, regarding their poor performance at the press conference.

Henry came in for part of the time that Chuck was there to get the President's signature on a letter to Frank Church regarding the foreign aid supplement. The President blew up when he discovered that the purpose of the letter really was to let Church get off the hook on his anti-Cambodia position. The President told Henry to change the letter substantially to correct the language so as to may-- make it absolutely clear that the President was not changing his position, Church was changing his. Henry also slipped in an order recommended by Admiral Anderson, reaffirming security regulations regarding leaked NSC documents, but it's something that won't have much effect.



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After Colson left, the President got to pondering the possibility of him as Director of Communications. He's very much intrigued with trying this as a possibility, but there would be some real problems.

We discussed some more of the idea of a TV show with Nancy Dickerson. The general consensus now is to do it just with her, not the networks. The President's back on the favorable line on that, although there's some, now, some staff disagreement. He wants Paul Keyes and others to go to work on potential questions that would give good insight into the man. Also, he wants Carruthers' ideas on locale, and so on.

In spite of last night's program disaster, he wants to consider David Frost as an interviewer, with the idea of then getting the program on a network or something; the idea being that Frost is more well-known and might be a safer guy to use as an interviewer.

We had a long meeting with the Vice President, Ehrlichman, and Finch this morning regarding his takeover of the office—or the responsibility—for relations with Governors, mayors, and county executives. It went pretty well. VP was in a good mood, wearing a t-shirt and a sort of sweat jacket. He is obviously very anxious to take on this responsibility on a full-scale basis and seems to understand the level of activity it will require of him, and wants to do it. It is astonishing how bad he is on judging staff, however. He feels that C.D. Ward is our very top man on inter-governmental relations, and he wants to get three or four more like him in there. He even suggested bringing Chotiner in as a man to help him on this, which would have unmitigated disastrous effects from a PR viewpoint, at least.

The President asked me to call John Connally and then just after that, Connally called me. He's planning to come up Monday for a meeting with the Treasury staff, or Sunday night, then go back Monday afternoon for his anniversary Monday night. He read me some segments of an incredibly horrible, vicious column by Pete Hamill in the *New York Post* which really tore him apart. He showed great humor as he roared with laughter about some of the really vicious



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personal slices that Hamill took at him and, to a degree, at the President. Fortunately, he apparently has a sense of humor and is able to maintain it.

I had a long session with our new TV guy, Mark Goode, or at least our candidate for the job, and on and off with the senior guy we now have, Bill Carruthers. I think we're putting together a good unit here. Carruthers is much more impressive than Goode, but Goode will work out very well as the No.2 man, the technician in handling follow-up on the scene. If we can now get the PR communications deal worked out, we'll have solved a couple of our major hang-ups and be able to move ahead more constructively. The other problems we're going to be working at are the Finch assignment and Rumsfeld's real role.

That's the end of December 19.