



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

Friday, April 13.

Another long Watergate day, as I spent a good part of the day locked in my office working on my revised statement, for whatever purpose we decide to use it. There were, however, several major external developments.

Colson reported to Ehrlichman this morning that he had reports that Jeb Magruder had met with two different reporters and also had met with Mitchell this week. And that he was putting out the story that Mitchell was not involved at all in the Watergate, and that he had discussed specifically with me both the idea of bugging and the Watergate in particular. He claims he also had the same discussions with Colson. Chuck's conclusion from this was that Magruder and Mitchell were conspiring together to sink Colson and me in their own self-defense, on the theory that if they could get that much blood, the whole effort would be dropped and Mitchell would be clear.

This he covered in some detail with John, and John reported to the President and to me, and that started the whole track of revised thinking and emotion. Then, a little later, while I was over talking that over with the President, John was meeting with John Dean and he came over to report a whole new chain of events, which was that Dean's lawyers had met with the US Attorneys and come up with a whole new insight into the process of the case at the grand jury. According to this theory, they have the case totally made on Magruder and almost total on Mitchell and they have no doubt that they will complete it, and they intend to bring indictments on both of them about May 15.

The indication from them is that they have nothing on anyone in the White House, which, of course, there's no way that they could have, and that they have no intention of trying to develop anything in that direction. They are interested in the post-June area and will be trying to develop the material in that as they go along, and they apparently feel they have some pretty good leads into that.



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

In the process, I had Larry check with Magruder, and he came back with an extremely interesting telephone conversation, which, fortunately, he taped, in which Magruder denied meeting with the reporters, denied having talked with Mitchell yet, but then spelled out his position, which is the recognition that he's had it. And the decision to tell the story or, at least, probably to, he hasn't made the final decision, but if he talks at all he will tell the true story, which will be rough for Mitchell, but it will, of course, clear the White House, specifically me. As would the current grand jury development.

In a follow-up conversation, Jeb admitted to Larry that he had had a conversation with a reporter, but he had covered the same old ground, denying anything and telling the standard story, which doesn't jibe with Colson's information.

Colson originally, though, told Ehrlichman he had a tape recording of this interview, but when I called him to say I'd like to hear the tape, he said he didn't have a tape, he had a transcript, so I said he should bring the transcript over and we'd review it, and then he said, well, he didn't actually have the transcript, but someone else did, so I asked him if he'd get it, and then he backed off on that and said he'd try but wasn't sure he could. Which sort of shoots some holes into his story.

The thing was boiling along in that direction, with the Magruder tape being the best thing we've gotten yet on clearing things up at our end, although he does say he will, to a degree, implicate Dean, and to a minor degree, Strachan, and, of course, to a major degree, Mitchell. He-- while we were working on that, Ehrlichman got a call from Colson, who said that he and his lawyer partner, Shapiro, needed to come over immediately and see John. They came over and reported that they've learned that Hunt is going to tell the whole story to the grand jury on Monday at 2:00, which set in a new chain of events, at least on the thinking side, as to whether we can get out in front of them, whether there's a way to bring the whole thing to a focus now, have Mitchell step forward and clean the whole thing up, or have Magruder do his pitch early and get things moving in that way. They apparently also, that's Colson and his partner, have some information



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

about the results of the Vesco grand jury which is also probably going to indict Mitchell, as is a grand jury in Washington that's looking into some contractor named Klein, who supposedly gave money to Mitchell. That is involved in some way in the Vice President matter that he raised with me the other day.

So, right now we're in the midst of pursuing a whole range of alternatives. Ehrlichman and I met with Dean for quite a while this afternoon to try to run out some of the possibilities and figure whether there's any way we actually can bring the thing to a head this weekend. Ehrlichman's main goal in it seems to be to try to get the thing on the record as having come from the White House, so the President breaks the case and cleans the thing up.

My view is that it's better to let it run through the grand jury, get the case broken, and then the President can say that this shows, as it certainly does, that he was following the right course right from the beginning of letting the legal process run in the proper way, so that it brings the guilty people to account and protects the innocent people, which all of these hearings and innuendoes have not done. I strongly feel that's the best route for us, but we'll get back at it tomorrow and see what we can develop.

One interesting point that I didn't mention last night was the long talk I had with Kissinger, who came into my office to say that every time that he meets with the President still, the President starts out by saying are you sure you don't feel we ought to dump Haldeman on this, and Kissinger then makes the pitch for why not, and the President says well, that's exactly my feeling, too, and Henry feels the President is just testing him on this each time, but can't quite figure it out. He feels strongly that I'm being had by Ehrlichman and any others who argue that I should make a statement or be the first one up at the Ervin hearings, because, if I am, that will put the whole focus of the thing on me and set me as the basis for any judgments or actions that they take from there on. He strongly feels that others should do that, that any explanations and so forth should be made by Ehrlichman or some functionary at the White House rather than me. He's somewhat in agreement with the Ziegler theory, which now is that the President should



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

National Archives and Records Administration, Online Public Access Catalog Identifier: 7787364

make a statement, but that definitely I should not. If the President does it, it should just be a straight White House statement that covers whatever ground we want to cover. In any event, I'm drafting my statement to have it ready.

Henry made the interesting comment that, if the President does let me down or let the situation develop to the point where I have to get out, he, too, will leave, because he would refuse to serve in a White House that would permit such a thing to happen. I think he really feels that his own position would be untenable without me here, and also that the same chain of events that would permit that to happen could also get him, and that he'd be better off to get out ahead of time. Besides that, I think he has some desire to get out anyway, and would use this as a means of doing so. In any event, I don't think the President has that in mind, because his conclusion generally comes out that they've got to keep me covered.

In any event, I don't see how there's any way that they can gain anything by dropping me anyway, because the case simply doesn't hold, especially now, of course, but I mean even before the developments of today. Today's developments pretty well lock the thing on Mitchell and Magruder, with a few others possibly falling with them. The President now is very concerned, as would be expected, about Mitchell and Jeb, but especially Mitchell and is adamant that we are not to be the ones to bring him down, which, of course, we won't be, since the case is 90 percent made already. As everybody's been saying, we come closer and closer to the moment of truth, and this finally may well be it. We'll determine tomorrow morning what immediate steps to take, and there's a strong feeling that now is the time to take them.

End of April 13.