



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

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Saturday, April 14.

The President agreed last night that he'd let Ehrlichman and me work out alternatives. Henry reported to him about 11:00 or 11:30 this morning, but he called us over at 9:00. He kept us there for two and a half hours, reviewing his notes on alternatives and so on. The point he was concerned about was the question of the President's involvement, whether anything had developed on that, and he said that Colson argues that-- or that Ehrlichman had told him that Colson argues that the President should persuade Liddy to talk, so that the President will appear to crack the case. Based on doing that, this weekend, prior to Hunt coming out on Monday or going to the grand jury on Monday, the President felt we need to put all the pieces together, such as the question of Magruder going to the press and all the other stories we've got, as to whether they've really worked out.

Ehrlichman then said that he had stayed up a good part of the night writing out what would be his report to the President on his overall findings, and he wanted to review that with the President. The President obviously didn't particularly want to hear it, although he listened to several points on it. His interest was reviewing the checklist that he had prepared. The Magruder question to the press was one item, the question of clemency to Hunt and whether that had actually been promised, he is concerned about. And he said maybe we've got to get to Mitchell now and say the jig is up and that the only way for this to be a plus is for you to go in and volunteer a statement.

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[Begin tape reel AC-33(B)]



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Saturday, April 14. The point that the President was trying to determine with Ehrlichman and me is, who should talk to Mitchell to tell him the jig is up. Ken Rush, Bill Rogers, Haldeman, the President, Elliot Richardson, Kleindienst, Rebozo, and then got to Ehrlichman. And it was agreed that really Ehrlichman was probably the only one that could do it. On his checklist he also had the point that Rogers must be told now that it's essential that he delay his departure until the whole Watergate thing is over; that we can't have him leaving in the middle of it. During all this, the President kept interrupting, wouldn't let us spin out any line at all. He had all these notes with his questions, especially regarding Hunt and Colson that he kept coming back to, and he insisted that we work with those.

We did zero in, then, on the need to talk to Mitchell, and I suggested that I ought to call him so as to set Ehrlichman up right and then Ehrlichman should talk with him. So I went out, called Mitchell, told him that we had been reviewing things with the President and the President felt that it was important that he come down immediately, if possible, to meet with Ehrlichman and review where we presently stand. Mitchell immediately said he would do so and that was at, I believe, 11:00 and he arrived by around 1:30.

We went over some other items with the President, agreed that Ehrlichman should also call Magruder in and review things with him. The point of Ehrlichman's review with each of them would be to say that he had been conducting an investigation of the entire situation for the President, for the last couple of weeks and that it had come to his attention that it was possible that some people were laboring under the assumption that their not testifying was in some way a service to the President, and that the President wanted them to know they should not restrict themselves out of that option. That if they wish to say anything or take any action, they should not refrain from doing so because of any concern that it would be harmful to the President. The point here being to try to get the basic point to Mitchell that the time has come for him to speak up. He was then to lead on from that into all the details of what the situation was. When I called Magruder, I couldn't get through to him, but finally did.



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We adjourned from the meeting with the President, so that he could meet with Haig and there were a couple of other things so we could get ready for Ehrlichman's meeting with Mitchell and that I could reach Magruder.

I had trouble reaching Jeb, and when I finally did get him, he said he had made his decision late last night to tell everything and that he was going ahead with that. Then he sort of spelled out to me that he'd concluded now that there was no hope for him. There were witnesses on top of witnesses and there was nothing he could do now but tell the truth, and hope that that would lighten his punishment. I told him the same pitch I gave Mitchell, that Ehrlichman wanted to talk with him and review the President's thing. He said fine and he would come over at 4:00 and do that. Ehrlichman felt when I reported to him that Jeb had already made his decision that he didn't need to see Jeb, but in talking with the President a little later to report on the Mitchell meeting, it was agreed that Ehrlichman should see Jeb so that we'd be on the record.

It was further agreed that Ehrlichman should talk with the Attorney General following these meetings and turn over what information he had gained to him, so that the President would be clear on having cooperated fully with whatever information he had.

Ehrlichman had his meeting with Mitchell, which lasted about an hour, and the upshot of it was that Mitchell says he feels completely clear in his own heart and in his own mind, that he has no guilt and has no intention of stepping forward. That he has his reputation and position to protect and he's going to have to defend that in every possible way and will do so. He apparently lobbed in a number of sort of veiled illusions to Mitchell on things that might come up, problems we might have and all, if people started talking and totally stonewalled any question of his own involvement.

The next development then was Ehrlichman's meeting with Magruder, at which Magruder told him he not only had made his decision but had carried out his act and that he and his attorneys had met with the US Attorney and given them the full story. Jeb's attorneys were with him when he met with John and they said they'd be happy to give Ehrlichman the same story that they-- the



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same full report that they gave the US Attorney. They proceeded to do so, spelling out the step-by-step development of Watergate and related matters and follow-up.

It almost totally and precisely confirmed what Ehrlichman had written down last night late in terms of how, based on the hearsay he picked up, he saw the thing as having unfolded and very totally and clearly implicates Mitchell as part of the planning, approval, review and so on of the Watergate, which is directly contrary to Mitchell's assertions, and will give Mitchell a serious problem when they call him, which now they will have to do, of course.

Jeb also implicates John Dean in the earlier planning meetings, which is no problem, because Dean intended to do that himself, but he also ties Dean into the ongoing stuff and very heavily into the activity post-discovery, post-June. He ties Strachan in fairly heavily on knowledge, saying he had a copy of the budget for the final and approved activity and that since he had no objection from Strachan, he assumed it was approved over here. He has no reason to believe that I had seen the budget, which I didn't, and he apparently completely clears me of any involvement. But it creates a problem, indirectly, by his involvement of Strachan.

Ehrlichman reviewed the whole story with me. Then we went over and reviewed it with the President, and the general feeling is that that pretty well settles things. That, then, just got us in to a discussion of the question of our tactics regarding a Haldeman statement, our dealings with the Ervin Committee and so forth, which poses the next set of problems. As a matter of strategy, it's the general feeling of Magruder's lawyers and others that, based on this whole thing, Ervin can't go ahead with his hearings, at least until the trials and sentencing are completed on the Watergate process, but we have the problem of having to announce something this week. The general feeling of the President at this point, and he at one point said he had made the decision, is that we would go ahead on agreement to send our people up on television, that we need to get out in front of something and that that's our best bet. I still argue that the break in the Watergate case will dominate everything and that we don't need other action, but I'm not sure that's a good evaluation.



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We worked at this discussion until 6:30 and then had to leave to hurriedly get ready for the White House Correspondents dinner, which went off with no problems, but it was no particular plus.

End of April 14.

The President called me at home late tonight after the dinner to sort of talk through it. He felt it had gone pretty well. Laughed about the quote he used from David Lawrence, because he said he never told me that, but it's the kind of thing he might have said anyway, which was about the only problem, the only tougher job than that of the President's waging war, was that of the President's waging peace. Then he sort of reviewed our situation, made the point that when you think about it, the hopes for peace in the world really depend on the office of the President, and we can't be compromised in carrying out that office by lack of confidence in the President arising out of the Watergate, and that really overrides the consideration of any individual or any other problems.

[End of April 14.]