



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

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Thursday, April 19.

At Camp David. Ehrlichman and I spent the night up here last night with the President after a painful sort of farewell dinner. At least, I think that's what he had in mind. Kissinger called first thing this morning. Said that the President had called him Tuesday night late after the Sinatra dinner and said that he thought Ehrlichman and Haldeman would be destroyed by what is going to happen. And Kissinger said that we should, in his view, pull the wagons around the White House and fight. On Wednesday, the President asked Kissinger again. If we were destroyed-- Henry said that if we were going to be destroyed, that we should be given a way to get out without being implicated. We could leave on the ground that I was implicated-- one way I could leave is on the grounds I was implicated. The other is on the grounds that I didn't know and this only I should do, if we're going to fall eventually anyway. Kissinger believes every effort should be made to keep me, and probably I'll end up stronger. But that if I'm going to be destroyed anyway, I must be sure that I am, and then get out before the slow erosion starts. The course now should be to pull the wagons around until the hysteria subsides. Haldeman should not be lumped with Magruder and Dean and should not be bled to death. If I stay, I should start asserting command, giving orders. If not, everything is going to go on leaking around the White House. The leaks will stop if they think I'm out or if they think I'm in. But you need one or the other.

On the chopper in today, the President talked about the question of our lawyers. Wondered about the question of what kind of immunity Ervin can give Dean? What effect the resignation would have on the prosecution and on the Dean deal? What kind of a bargain can we make? He made the point over and over that the thing we must avoid, at any cost, is being indicted. Went into the question of the grand jury leak and the legal possibilities there, and our idea of a libel action against Weicker for what he said about me on TV last night.

The President is trying to get Dean nailed down. He makes the point that we relied on Dean for both supervision and advice. That is, he'd say you don't want to know that, because of a deposition of a civil case and so on. Ehrlichman argues that the prosecution of Dean is what we



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need to destroy his credibility. After we got back from Camp David, he had us in the Oval Office. Made the point that he can't run the White House without a strong person, and that if Ehrlichman can survive, that will solve it. If not, and we both have to leave, then he's going to put Lynn over here to replace me. He feels that we should not let the day come when the grand jury comes out and the President has to be forced to move on us. It's getting to the point where we have to bite the bullet. He had thought we should separate the innocent from the guilty, Mitchell, Magruder and so forth. So Haldeman and Ehrlichman should step out and say they want to fight this battle. We must fight all the way, with every legal device, to avoid prosecution legally. He wants us to think of the PR side in terms of ourselves and the Presidency both.

John and I then pulled out of there to meet with our lawyers and go over the things. They feel strongly we should not leave and, having covered that ground, it was decided it would be a good idea for the President perhaps to meet with the lawyers this evening, which he decided to do. He spent the afternoon pondering this with other people over at the EOB. Then went out for dinner on the *Sequoia* alone. Came back and met with our lawyers for about an hour.

In the meantime, Ziegler called me at home to say that the *Post* has another story for tomorrow saying Dean's associates have said that Dean will implicate people above and below himself, and that Haldeman engineered a cover-up to hide the involvement of Presidential aides in the bugging matter, and goes on with other details of the story. We checked this back and forth, and Ziegler finally checked it with Dean, who said that he suspects who it is that put it out. That he has things scrambled, that he never mentioned Haldeman. That there's some fact and some fiction in the story. Eventually, Dean agreed to have Ziegler say that he denied mentioning Haldeman. And so we're going to try that, to see if it'll help any.

The President called me at 9:30. Said he had talked to the lawyers and I told him about the *Post* story. He liked the lawyers and felt that had been a good meeting. He sounded much more relieved than he has up to now. I told him about the *Post* story and he said, well, we've just got to expect that kind of thing, don't we? He said the lawyers don't buy Garment's idea that is



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Haldeman getting out. He feels now we have to play it day by day. The President warned them about the news stories and said it's going to be tough to ride, but we'll see what we can do.

Wilson, the lawyer, called, said he had a good meeting with the President. He's a little concerned about word getting out as to why we have counsel, and suggested the line that we simply say we thought we should get the advice of competent counsel.

End of April 19.