



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

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Monday, April 16.

Another all Watergate day, as they generally tend to be now. The President had me in at 9:30 and asked that Ehrlichman and I spend some time today putting down what we think our vulnerabilities are and a game plan for dealing with them. In other words, here's the Haldeman case, here's the Ehrlichman case, what's likely to come out. Can it be handled? The President thinks it can. If so, how should it be handled, and also he wants to develop the record of what the President's done to investigate, and when Ehrlichman came in, when he talked to Dean, and so on. He then had Ehrlichman come in, too, and told him he's getting Dean in, to have him sign the letters. They agreed that he should sign both the resignation and the leave of absence letter. Then he said, again, he wanted Ehrlichman and me to put down our cases at the worst. And he says he'll make no decisions until he sees how this bounces.

Also he wanted a scenario on his role, what he did as he found out Dean, the Camp David, the Ehrlichman report, and so on. Had a PR plan as to how we disclose the President plans. He also told Ehrlichman to talk to Moore and have him talk to Gray and Fielding about the Hunt safe problem. After that session we left for the President to get ready for his labor union appearance, but then he had us back in for a minute because he was delayed in departure. Oh no, that's right, we went out because he had to meet with John Dean, and then he brought us in after the Dean meeting. And he said he had asked for his resignation, but Dean then said, well, what about Haldeman and Ehrlichman. The President said I have their resignations in hand always and that's no problem, and then Dean asked to have the letters to redraft them, so that they wouldn't do him any harm in his hearing. His lawyers think that his criminal liability is very limited, because it's very hard to prove because he's just a conduit. They say it's the same with Haldeman and Ehrlichman, because it's tangential and that Justice may very well come out with no White House indictments at all.

He says Colson's involved in three areas. The President couldn't remember what they were, Bittman and Hunt and something else; and the President says the PR was the real concern, not



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the legal thing. Said he'd like to meet with Rogers this afternoon at 4:00. Wanted me to meet with him first and brief him, and that he would see Garment after that. Garment is of the opinion that the President has to make a massive move and cut the whole thing out in one blow, which means getting rid of Ehrlichman, me and Dean, and anybody else that may be at all involved. That kind of thinking sort of rambled on through the day.

Rogers came in at 4:00. Ehrlichman and I briefed him, and then he went over to see the President. And then he went on out to dinner with the President on the boat, but they did have Ziegler in for a while before they left. The general thinking was that there was no point in making a move now, that any mileage we get out of a grandstand play now, we'll get out of it later also, and by waiting we can see what our real options are in better form than we know now. So, apparently, the decision is to hold tight which is what it should be, and we'll see what develops as we go along. I think maybe we're over the worst part, at least for now.

The Ervin Committee decided today to hold off on starting their hearings until May 15. So we've got some time there; and by then Justice will probably have something out. It turns out, however, that the President met with Petersen, and he says that they're having a problem with Dean and Magruder, because their attorneys, in both cases, are holding out for complete immunity, which the prosecutors aren't, at least now, going to grant. Dean's lawyers, apparently, have threatened that they're going to move the case in and take on everybody, right on up to and including the President, if he isn't given immunity. So everybody is playing a pretty tough game at this point, and it could get pretty bloody in the process. Magruder, too, is holding out for complete immunity, so they couldn't make the deal with him and get him on his guilty plea with a big public announcement today. They may not be able to work that deal out either. They hauled Gordon in and really roughed him up, apparently. Gave him all kinds of threats about his family and disbarment and that sort of thing and then told him to go away and get a lawyer and come back when he was ready to get down to business. So they got him a little shook. Ehrlichman and I are trying to locate a lawyer, and other than that no major developments.



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End of April 16.