

TRANSCRIPT OF A TELEPHONE
CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN
ON APRIL 14, 1973 FROM
11:02 TO 11:16 P.M.

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PRESIDENT: I just, uh, Bebe is over here overnight and
I just told him about the Mitchell thing so

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: he wouldn't get a surprise.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Naturally, he can't believe it so that's
that.

HALDEMAN: Well, I can

PRESIDENT: It's one of those things.

HALDEMAN: It's hard to believe, but it's uh,

PRESIDENT: One thing that occurs to me, Bob, is this
and as I reflect a little on Magruder's
stuff.

HALDEMAN: Um, huh.

PRESIDENT: I'll be damned if I don't think that some '
of that could be, you know, uh, uh,
exaggerated but I, I just don't know

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I, I don't know, I can't tell. He's uh, he's
been so, he's uh, he's uh, obviously
flailing around like a wild man at the
present time, but

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HALDEMAN: No, no, he's not really. I think I, I think
he was earlier trying and er--, he was
frantic but once, once he figured out where
he was going I think, I think he's

PRESIDENT: He thinks that this is what he remembers
now.

HALDEMAN: Yep. Um, huh.

PRESIDENT: But he could not

HALDEMAN: He does.

PRESIDENT: I'm sure that his interpretations on various
things are to be tr--, I mean to be

interpreted either way, you know, like his interpretation on Dean, his interpretation on, on Strachan, for example.

HALDEMAN: Yep, yep.

PRESIDENT: Certainly is

HALDEMAN: That's right and invar-

PRESIDENT: I don't, I just don't know how it's gonna come out, though, that's the whole point and I

HALDEMAN: I just

PRESIDENT: ...I just don't know as I, when I was serious when I said to John, uh, at the end there I says God damn it, all these guys that p--, participated in raising the money and so forth have got to stick to their line that they did not raise this money to obstruct justice.

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HALDEMAN: Well, I sure didn't think they were.

PRESIDENT: Hmm?

HALDEMAN: I didn't think they were and I don't think they did.

PRESIDENT: Well

HALDEMAN: With maybe some exceptions.

PRESIDENT: Right, right, of course, they will if they, I suppose there they will say that, uh, I mean, uh, uh, uh, I me--, like, like, Like Mc Cord has said it was the purpose, that was the purpose but that Dean-that somebody told him that, and that so that didn't mean anything.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And the question, of course, is there, is Liddy and, and, Um, the others, but

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...We shall see. You know it's the word of the, of the felons against the word of the men that raised the money, huh?

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And, um
(Pause)

HALDEMAN: Well, you just, 'cause you, you don't know how much will come what way either, I mean that

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PRESIDENT: Now we, we have, uh

HALDEMAN: We could get (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: At least, at least I think, I think (laughs) now we pretty much know what the worst is I, I do I don't know what the hell else they could have that's any worse, you know what I mean, unless -you know

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Unless there's, and I mean, I don't know that uh, unless somebody's got, uh, some piece of paper that somebody signed or some God damned thing but

HALDEMAN: Well

PRESIDENT: ...that I doubt.

HALDEMAN: Doesn't appear that there is such a thing. (pause) I mean, there's been no hint of that, what's in here is, is all stuff that, that, uh, has been hinted at. It goes further than, than what was, uh, found in some areas but it's, obviously it's totally consistent basically with what everything John had developed.

PRESIDENT: Let me ask you this. I wonder if it isn't not only fair but in our interest, uh, for either you or John, now not going into too much detail, to fill him in on Magruder. I mean, having in mind, uh, could Colson, uh could, uh

HALDEMAN: I told Ehrlichman

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PRESIDENT: Colson. And, uh, I mean, we have no interest, you know what I mean, in getting his ass up there, you know, uh, uh, guilty on a perjury charge.

HALDEMAN: Um, huh. 'Course there'-s nothing Jeb said that's inconsistent with anything that Chuck has said.

PRESIDENT: Oh. Could be right. Chuck could say yes, the Liddy project, sure, but I thought the Liddy project was something else.

HALDEMAN: That's right. That's what he -does say.

PRESIDENT: He does, huh?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, and, and as, uh, Ehrlichman said and, and under questioning they specific, ah, uh, specifically said that he didn't get into the, uh, you know, any specifics on it and they had nothing that hits him on any specifics. And, I think he's probably clear

on them.

PRESIDENT: I think he believes that, Bob, I mean, I know

HALDEMAN: I do, too.

PRESIDENT: I think he believes that, but

HALDEMAN: I've felt that all along.

(Pause)

PRESIDENT: Well, we'll sleep on the God damned thing and

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HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, what's the situation tomorrow? Is Ehrlichman gonna, uh, sit down with Ziegler again or something?

HALDEMAN: Yeah

PRESIDENT: I, I do think that, PR thing and, and we've got to sort of, sort of make up our minds on what the hell Ehrlich...

HALDEMAN: Get at that, I want to get at, get in a statement done.

HALDEMAN: And we again, we got to get at, just sort of make this decision with regard to this God damned committee. I, I, I don't know.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: And I'm, I, I still, I still have, uh, mixed emotions on it, I don't know, I don't know, I've (sigh) I've, I've been one way one time, one way another.

HALDEMAN: Well, it's a, it's a mixed bag. It has, has pluses and minuses and I, it's hard to be sure, which out weigh the other.

PRESIDENT: one way, scenario would be, simply say they will all come up on, every body will come up in Executive Session, including Dean, just say that, and make that offer and that's flat.

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HALDEMAN: Yeah, and that gets turned down and then we're standing on the question of --the way it will be played is not that the Committee is being unreasonable by insisting on television but that we're being unreasonable by insisting against it.

PRESIDENT: Well it, that would be true unless you got, and hammered that the whole record could be made public.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: It's only that we don't--we want information, not a show.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, that we think it should be.

HALDEMAN: The question, the question then is you lose something, obviously by doing that, and that do we really gain enough to make it worth it? How bad is it if we go on television?

PRESIDENT: (Sigh).

HALDEMAN: I'm not at all sure it's all that bad. In the first place, it's gonna be in the daytime. The second place, as of now, it's not going to be carried live by the networks.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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HALDEMAN: Now it might be, but I would guess it won't be. After this other stuff breaks, it isn't going to be that important anymore. The networks don't want to carry it. It costs them money. What will probably end up happening is it will be, it will be carried on the public broad casting

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...which has virtually no audience in the daytime.

PRESIDENT: Um, huh.

HALDEMAN: Virtually no audience

PRESIDENT: I suppose what happens there is that that every new break then is carried for five minutes or ten in the evening news.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: That's the point.

HALDEMAN: That's right. It's going to be carried anyway it's a question whether it's carried with, with, uh, for five minutes with one of us on camera for a couple of those minutes or whether it's carried for three minutes with uh

PRESIDENT: Weicker.

HALDEMAN: ...with Weicker and John Chancellor or Dan Rather.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

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HALDEMAN: Saying--you know

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...trembling with fear and obviously trying to hide the truth, uh,...

PRESIDENT: I wonder if you would

HALDEMAN: ...so

PRESIDENT: ..uh, would do this, uh, did you, did you discuss the public or private thing with m--, two people whose judgement is, Rogers and, uh, and, and Connally. What did Connally think--public?

HALDEMAN: I, I'm not sure.

PRESIDENT: Would you mind, uh

HALDEMAN: I'd have to reopen that.

PRESIDENT: Would it be alright for you to call him and ask him?

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: I wish you would tomorrow and say, look, we just got to make a command decision on this.

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: And I think you should tell, do you think you should tell him about, uh, Magruder?

HALDEMAN: Nope.

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PRESIDENT: No, I guess not.

HALDEMAN: I, I can say the whole thing looks like it's coming to, uh,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...to a

PRESIDENT: It's gonna

HALDEMAN: conclusion

PRESIDENT: ...before the Grand Jury.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Without saying any specific.

PRESIDENT: Right. Now the, uh, the other point--fellow whose judgement would be pretty good, Bob, would be Bill Rogers on that.

HALDEMAN: Yep. I agree.

PRESIDENT: And, um, I wish you'd give him a call.

HALDEMAN: Alright.

PRESIDENT: Um huh.

HALDEMAN: I will.

PRESIDENT: I think what Bill, will, you, you, could tell him, don't you think?

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HALDEMAN: Nope. I don't think I should. In the first place, I'm not supposed to know.

PRESIDENT: Well, this, this isn't from the Grand Jury, Bob.

HALDEMAN: No, I know, but, uh, Kleindienst is worried about, uh, John giving the information to anybody and I

PRESIDENT: I see. You're right.

HALDEMAN: I don't see anything to be gained from telling him anyway.

PRESIDENT: But you can tell him that, uh, our investigations indicate that this, uh, Grand Jury is, is hot on the trail of breaking the thing now.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And it's go--, and that's, uh, the way it's gonna come, that, but, uh, but if you wouldn't mind giving a call in the morning to both those

HALDEMAN: Okay.

PRESIDENT: fellows and tell them that I, this is, you're calling for the President,

HALDEMAN: Okay.

PRESIDENT: that he'd like to have their considered judgement, should you be on television or not on television.

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HALDEMAN: Right. Will do.

PRESIDENT: And, um, and it may be on the Dean thing. I'm almost inclined to think we ought to give on that. What do you think? (laugh) The idea of backing down, we,, uh, they're gonna think we've backed down anyway so what's the difference.

HALDEMAN: That has never bothered me and that, I, I guess I'm wrong on it because it sure bothers other people.

PRESIDENT: It bothers Ziegler and the rest, but

HALDEMAN: I think we gain more by backing down than we lose.

PRESIDENT: Yes, just say because of

HALDEMAN: I don't, I don't think you have any problem of being associated

PRESIDENT: ...You, just that by all this

HALDEMAN: been in enough battles anyway.

PRESIDENT: by all this, by all, because of all of these charges that have been around, these men are

entitled to be heard in public.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And I want them heard in public and I want them to tell their story in public. I'm almost convinced that that's what we ought to do with the whole damn bunch and

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PRESIDENT: not try to stand on the Dean thing and the rest. Humph, get a settlement that way. Well, that's my present view, Bob, and we can go on it. Uh, point, another point, uh, you, you will, you, you do, it's no one person you do tell, tell, and I uh, he can still say you, that he just told him to tell the truth, uh, you ought to tell Strachan but tell him

HALDEMAN: John's gonna te

PRESIDENT: ...John is--but not in a way that Strachan indicates that he knows what the other fellow is saying.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Strachan's smart enough to do that.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: So that he's got to be prepared that he's gonna be asked this and he's gonna be asked that. John should just put him through a little wringer there.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: Well, John is the one that should do it. He's conducting an invest igation for the President.

HALDEMAN: Well, and he's got the information, I don't.

PRESIDENT: Um, huh.

HALDEMAN: But I can reconstruct.

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PRESIDENT: No, that's right, I agree, but John will know the question to

HALDEMAN: Specific points is what he needs to cover.

PRESIDENT: Um, huh. That's good. That's good. Well you know the point (laugh) rather interesting to me tonight that, uh, you know when you really think of what the hell, here we are, whole, it's really quite true. Enough about it without being melodramatic. The hopes for peace in this damn world do depend on this office right now in the next four years and, God damn it, we've got to, we've got to be sure that uh, that isn't compromised by anything that, you know, that indicates any lack of confidence in the President. Isn't that what it gets down to?

HALDEMAN: Yep

PRESIDENT: That's why I think this is sort of a cheap price to pay, you know what I, mean, and, uh, on that point.

HALDEMAN: That's exactly right.