

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY STAFF
FOR THE
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT AND JOHN DEAN
ON
APRIL 16, 1973, FROM 10:00 TO 10:40 A.M.

July 8, 1974

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10:00 TO 10:40 A.M.*

PRESIDENT: Hi John, how are you?

DEAN: Good morning. Good morning.

PRESIDENT: Sit down. Sit down. Trying to get my
remarks ready to [unintelligible] the
building trades.

DEAN: So I understand.

PRESIDENT: Yes, indeed. yeah. You know, I was
thinking we ought to get the odds and ends,
uh [unintelligible] we talked, and, uh, it
was confirmed that -you remember we talked
about resignations and so forth and so on
-that I should have in hand, not to be
released,

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: but I should have in hand something, or
otherwise they'll say, "What the hell did
you -after Mr. Dean told you all of this,
what did you do?" You see what I mean?

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Now I talked to Petersen, uh, about, uh,
about the thing,

*The quotation marks used in this transcript
are for convenience and do not indicate
verbatim quotation by the speaker.

and I said, "Now, uh, what do you want to do about, uh, about this situation on Dean, and so forth?" And he said, "Well," he said, "I," he said, "I would do n-I, I don't want to announce anything now." You know what I mean?

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: But what is your feeling on that?

DEAN: [Clears throat]

PRESIDENT: See what I mean?

DEAN: Are we talking Dean, or are we talking Dean, Ehrlichman, and Haldeman?

PRESIDENT: Well, I'm talking Dean

DEAN: Dean.

PRESIDENT: at this moment.

DEAN: All right.

PRESIDENT: Dean at this moment, because you're going to be, uh, you, yo'"re going to be doing it. I'll have to handle them, also. But, the point is, what's your advice that we -You see, the point is, we, we don't have -I just, I just got it, I just typed up a couple, just to have here which I'd be willing to put out. You know,

DEAN: Uhhuh.

PRESIDENT: in the event that, uh, certain things occurred.

DEAN: I understand.

PRESIDENT: But you see, put the, uh, the, put, just putting the -you don't want to put any lies into it. Uh [unintelligible]. What's your advice?

DEAN: I think, I think it'd be the -good to have it on hand.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: I would think, to be very honest with you --

PRESIDENT: Have those others, too?

DEAN: Have those others, also.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, yeah. I will. Well as a matter of fact, they both su--, suggested it for themselves.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: So I got that, uh -I am sorry, Steve, I hit the wrong bell.

DEAN: [Laughs]

PRESIDENT: So I've already done that with them.

DEAN: All right.

PRESIDENT: So, they said, "Look, uh, they're ready any time you want them." I've got that. Now I want to get your advice on that, too. So what I would, now what I would think we want to do, we should have it in two different forms, here. We should have it -and I, would like to discuss with you the forms. It seems to me that your, the form should be, uh, uh, request an immediate indefinite leave of absence. That'd be one thing. And the other, of course, would be, uh, just a straight resignation.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Uh, first, uh, what I would suggest is that you sign both. That's what I had in mind. And then we'll talk about after, uh, because you don't know yet what you're going -For example, you could go in and plead guilty. You'd have to resign.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: If, on the other hand, you're going in, uh, on a, some other basis, then I think a leave of absence is then

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: the proper thing to do.

DEAN: I would think so.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, that's the way I would discuss it with, uh, with others, too. But if you have any other thoughts, let me know. I'm not trying to press you on a thing. Just, I just want to be sure, John, you've got the record, that you're, you're, uh, so that I've done everything that I [clears throat] [unintelligible]. Do you agree?

DEAN: Uh, I, I think it's a good idea. I frankly do.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: But, uh, I think if you do it for, for one -I think you have problems with others too, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: I already have done that with others.

DEAN: Yeah. All right. That's what I've been trying to advise you that, you know

PRESIDENT: But on theirs, on theirs, on theirs, both the, uh, uh, pending the, uh -It, it is all pending their appearance, and so forth. Just as it is in yours. Nothing's going to be said.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: But I've got to have it in hand. You see what I mean? I mean, my, my reason, as I told them -As a matter of fact, after our talk last night, I told them, I said, "We, I've got to have it in hand so that I can move on this, if, uh, as Petersen is going to report to me every day." You see?

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: I said, "Now, Petersen," I said, "if you get this stuff confirmed," I said, "I need to know." And he said, "Well, I, uh --" 'cause I asked him, I asked him specifically, I said, "What, what are you, uh, what, uh, what are. you going to do?" He says, "Well, LaRue is going to be today." And, I don't know who else. Strachan's going to be today. There are three today I think. I don't know. Who's the third one?

DEAN: I don't know.

PRESIDENT: That's right. You're not supposed to.

[Laughter]

PRESIDENT: Uh, then, okay.

DEAN: What I would like to do is, is to draft up for you an alternative letter. Put it in both options and you can just put them in the file.

PRESIDENT: Uh. huh.

DEAN: Uh, just short and, and sweet.

PRESIDENT: Uh huh. All right. Fine. I had, I had dictated some thing myself, on my own, which I just, which is, which is, uh [unintelligible] how this -But you don't have to. If you can give me a better form, fine. I want you to do it either way. Do you, uh, or do you want to just prepare something?

DEAN: I'd like to prepare something.

PRESIDENT: Good. All right. Fine. Why don't you take this? And, uh, take those, just as an

DEAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: idea, and have something that, uk -I've got to see Petersen at 1:30.

DEAN: All right.

PRESIDENT: Understand, I don't want it s-put anything out, because I don't want to jeopardize your position at, at all. You've got a right to, just as everybody else has, to, to let's say you've been -you've carried a hell of a load here and I -But I just feel that since what you said last night that we've got to do on this and with, uh, Haldeman and Ehrlichman -I have, I have leave of absences from them. Which, however, I will not use until I get the word from Petersen on corroboration,

DEAN: All right.

PRESIDENT: which he, which he advised himself. I talked to him after I talked to you. Left about 11:45. I told the son-of-a-bitch, he doesn't know how hard we work around here.

DEAN: And you will have something, uh, uh, within a couple of hours.

PRESIDENT: Well, I.

DEAN: You think just put it in the file?

PRESIDENT: I won't be back, I won't be back, uh. Yeah. You, you can, uh, you draft what you want me to -in other words--

DEAN: And if you don't like what I draft, tell me and I will change it in any way

PRESIDENT: Oh, sure, sure.

DEAN: that you want.

PRESIDENT: But I can't make a decision

DEAN: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: of course you see -And, and also, it may, it may depend -Well, put it this way, put it this way, you draft what

you, what you want. And we can, uh, if I have any concerns about it, I'll give you a ring. You can, uh, be around, and so forth.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, but, but, you would agree you should -but nothing should be put out now. Right?

DEAN: I would agree. I was, I was thinking about that.

PRESIDENT: You see, we've got the problem --today the thing may break. You know, with Magruder, uh, and so forth. Ant uh, I'm, uh, I -You know what I mean. That's what I wanted to run over with you, briefly, as to, you know, to get your feeling again as to how we handle it, how we -You know, you, you were saying the President should stay ahe--, one step ahead of this thing. Well, we've got, uh -The point is, the only problem is what the hell can I say publicly? Now, here's what we've done.

DEAN: Well, you see --

PRESIDENT: I called in -I got in Kleindienst. Uh, we've I've been working on it all week.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Actually, I mean I got, as soon as I got the Magruder thing, then I, I got in Kleindienst, and, uh, then at four o'clock we got in, uh, sold uh, Petersen.

Kleindienst withdrew, uh, and, uh, uh, assigned Petersen. I said, "All right, Henry, I don't want to talk to Kleindienst anymore about this case. I'm just going to talk to you."

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: "You're in charge. You follow through and you're going through to get to the bottom of this thing and I am going to let the chips fall where they may." And we covered that all the way down the line. Now, I have to follow him to a certain extent on the prosecution side. On the other hand, on the PR side, I sure as hell am not going to let the Justice Department step out there

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: and say, "Look, we dragged the White House in here." I've got to step out and do it, John.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Don't you agree?

DEAN: That's right. Uh --

PRESIDENT: But yet, I don't want to walk out and say, "I -Look, John Dean's resignation has been accepted." Jesus Christ, that isn't fair.

DEAN: Nor would it be fair to say Ehr--, Ehrlichman and Haldeman's have.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. What --

DEAN: You know, I, I've already examined --

PRESIDENT: [Unintelligible] because you see they haven't been charged yet. As soon as they're charged [unintelligible]. But see he's -But in your case, is you haven't been charged with anything yet --

DEAN: No, I have not.

PRESIDENT: That's my problem, see with it --

DEAN: Uh --

PRESIDENT: All I wanted is to have on -The only reason I'm doing this is to, uh, because of you, what you said about some, what you said about them, and that's why I'm getting it from them too.

DEAN: Well, it's a, there's a chance, uh, uh -Well, there's a chance that today when LaRue goes down that Haldeman and Ehrlichman's name are going to be right down there before the Grand Jury.

PRESIDENT: Right. Well, the name will be in, but the point is, you don't just throw somebody out because of a name lying in court.

DEAN: I, I understand.

PRESIDENT: You understand. Uh, would you, you could also, if you

would, here's, uh, and I would like for you to prepare this in a letter that you would have for Ehrlichman and Haldeman. Would you do that too?

DEAN: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: And then I'll give them the form and let them work out their -something that's appropriate. Would you prepare that for me, then?

DEAN: Yes, I will.

PRESIDENT: But they told me last night, orally, just as you did, that, uh --

DEAN: They stand ready.

PRESIDENT: Cover the record. They said, "Look, we will leave in a minute. We'll leave-today. You can do whatever you want." And I said, "What the hell, we're going to have to wait until we get some evidence." You know what I mean?

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Which I think you agree with.

DEAN: I--That's what I do, and the question is timing, and, uh

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Uh --

PRESIDENT: Now, let's get Dean's advice as to how we handle this now, from, uh, now on. What is your, what's your advice?

DEAN: Well, I would say you should have the letters in hand and, then

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: based on what you learn from Petersen, you can make a judgment as to timing. I mean, I think you're still five steps ahead of what will ever emerge publicly. I don't think they --

PRESIDENT: They think in twelve hours it may break, somebody told me the news -the P68t's according to Ziegler, has got something now on this. Magruder talking around and every thing. I don't know.

DEAN: Well, I know, I know what -some of the things Magruder said. He said that, uh, that the prosecutors had asked him a number of questions about Ehrlichman and Haldeman. So there's no, there's no doubt that that's going to be out on the, uh,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: the street fast also.

PRESIDENT: Well, then we ought to move on that too.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: That's my point. You see --

DEAN: It's unfortunate that I, you know, I'm hoping that the ultimate resolution of this thing is that no one has any problems. And that's possible,

PRESIDENT: Legally.

DEAN: legally.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Which I hope is your case, too. In other words, when I say no one, nobody at the White House staff -not you, not Colson, not Ehrlichman, not Haldeman, because God damn it -Let me, let me, let me summarize this specific point again, because I need to, uh, you know, they, we know there was no -on the Dean report. Ziegler has always said it was oral.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Right. But you remember when you came in, I asked you the specific question: "Is anybody on the White House Staff involved?" You told me "No."

DEAN: That's right. And I have no knowledge --

PRESIDENT: You still believe that?

DEAN: Yes sir, I do.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. But you did tell me that in the aftermath there were serious problems.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Right. And, I said, "Well, let's see what they are." Right?

DEAN: And now you're beginning to see what they are. They're potential, technical, obstruction of justice problems.

PRESIDENT: Sure. But not necessarily.

DEAN: [Unintelligible]

PRESIDENT: Well, I talked to Petersen last night and he made exactly the same point. He says the obstruction was morally wrong. No, not morally. He said, it may not have been morally wrong, and it may not be legally wrong, but he said from the standpoint of the Presidency, you can't have it. That's

what his point was. So he, he seems to think that this, uh, that the obstruction of justice thing is a God damn hard thing to prove.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: To prove in court, which I, I think should be some comfort to you.

DEAN: Well, my lawyer tells me that, you know, "Legally, you're in, you're in damn good shape."

PRESIDENT: Is that right?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Because, uh, you're not--

DEAN: That's right. It's, it's a--

PRESIDENT: You were simply helping the defendants get their fees and their --

DEAN: Well --

PRESIDENT: Huh? What does he say?

DEAN: In that, in that position, I'm merely a conduit. Uh, it's

very technical, very technical. I am a conduit to other people. That is the problem.

PRESIDENT: Ub huh. What was the situation, John? This -The only time I ever heard any discussion of, uh, this supporting of the defendants -and I must say I, I guess I should have assumed somebody was helping them, I must have assumed it, but, uh, and, and I must say people were good in a way, I, I was busy -was when you mentioned to me some, something, about the, I mean, I think the last time we talked about Hal, uh, Hunt having a problem.

DEAN: Well --

PRESIDENT: But that, and that was, then we, but that was handled at, by Mitchell. Was that true or what the hell happened?

DEAN: That's, that's -The last time we had a request was the, was

PRESIDENT: How did it work out? Did you-?

DEAN: the Monday before sentencing.

PRESIDENT: He hit you with a, uh, uh,

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: at a dinner or something?

DEAN: No, no. O'Brien, who was one of the lawyers who was representing the Re-election Committee, was asked by Hunt to meet with him. He came to me after the meeting and said that, "Hunt asked the following message be passed to you." And I said, "Why me?" He said, "I asked Hunt the same question."

PRESIDENT: To you, Dean, or to me, the President?

DEAN: Asked of me,

PRESIDENT: Oh.

DEAN: Dean.

PRESIDENT: Oh yeah.

DEAN: It's the first time I'd ever heard anything like this. And I said, uh --

PRESIDENT: He had never asked

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: you before.

DEAN: No. Uh--

PRESIDENT: Let me tell you. What did you report to me on it, though? I -It was rather fragmentary, as I recall it. You said,

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: "Hunt had a problem," and, uh --

DEAN: Very fragmentary. I was, I --

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but that's not the thing. I, I said, "What, what -John, what's it going to cost to do this?" Uh, that's when I sent you to Camp -and said, "Well, for God's sake, let's see where this thing comes out."

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And you said it'd cost a million dollars.

DEAN: I said, "It," you know, "it conceivably could, and the way this," I said, "If we don't cut this thing--"

PRESIDENT: Exactly.

DEAN: Uh, anyway --

PRESIDENT: But that's the only conversation we had. Where -How was that handled? Who the hell handled that, that money?

DEAN: Uh, well, let me tell you the rest -what, what Hunt said. He said, "You tell Dean that I need seventy-two thousand dollars for my personal expenses, fifty thousand dollars for my legal fees."

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

DEAN: "If I don't get it, I'm going to have some things to say about the seamy things I did at the White House for John Ehrlichman."

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

DEAN: All right. I took that to Ehrlichman. Ehrlichman said, uh, "Have you talked to Mitchell about it?" I said, "No, I have not." Uh, he said, "Well, will you talk to Mitchell?" I said, "Yes, I will." I talked to Mitchell. I just passed it along to him. And then there was a meeting down here a few days later in, in Bob's office with Bob and Ehrlichman and Mitchell and myself. And, uh, Ehrlichman said at that time, he said, "Well is that problem with Hunt straightened out?" He said it to me and I said, "Well, ask the man who may know: Mitchell." And Mitchell said, "I think that problem is solved."

PRESIDENT: That's all?

DEAN: That's all he said.

PRESIDENT: Right. That's good. In other words, that was done at the Mitchell level?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: But, you had knowledge; Haldeman had a lot of knowledge; and

Ehrlichman had knowledge.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: And I suppose I did. I mean, I am planning to assume some culpability on that [unintelligible]

DEAN: I don't think so.

PRESIDENT: Why not?

DEAN: Uh --

PRESIDENT: I plan to be tough on myself as I am on the other thing, though, I, I must say I didn't really give it a thought at the time because I didn't know, uh --

DEAN: No one gave it a thought.

PRESIDENT: You did. You did.

DEAN: No one --

PRESIDENT: You didn't tell me this about Ehrlichman, for example. When you came in on that day

DEAN: I know.

PRESIDENT: you simply said, "Hunt needs this money." And you were using it as an example of the problems ahead.

DEAN: I, I have tried, uh, all along to make sure that anything I passed to you myself didn't cause you any personal problems.

PRESIDENT: John, let me ask you this. Let us suppose if this thing breaks and they ask you, John Dean: "Now, John you were the President's Counsel. Did you report things to the President? What did you report to the President?"

DEAN: I, I would, I would refuse to answer any questions as to anything --

PRESIDENT: No, no, no, no, uh, no -I think you should -Let me ask you this.

DEAN: Unless you waive --

PRESIDENT: Let me say, on this point, I would, uh, would not waive. You could say, "I reported to the President." Uh, that "The President called me in." I mean, "The President has authorized me to say -He called me in, and, uh, and, uh, asked me--"

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Uh, make that, that before, that when the event first occurred, you conducted an investigation and passed to

the President the message: "No White House personnel, according to your investigation, was involved." You did do that, didn't you?

DEAN: I did that through Ehrlichman and Haldeman.

PRESIDENT: That's it. You did do that.

DEAN: If I'm under oath, now, I'm, I'm going to have to say I did that through Ehrlichman and Haldeman.

PRESIDENT: No. But I know you did that. I didn't see you.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Remember I didn't see you until after the election.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: But you see -all right. Now, but then you say, "And then, after the election, the President, when the McCord thing broke, called you in." I think that's when it was, wasn't it?

DEAN: No, uh --

PRESIDENT: After the McCord thing.

DEAN: No. It was before the McCord thing because you remember you told me after the Friday morning that McCord's letter--

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

DEAN: He said, "He predicted this. This was going to happen." Because I had, oh, in, in about the week, uh, or two weeks --

PRESIDENT: How did it --Why did I get you in there? What, what triggered me getting you in?

DEAN: Well, we just started, we just started talking about this thing, and --

PRESIDENT: But I called you in, you and Moore together, didn't I?

DEAN: Well --

PRESIDENT: For a Dean Report.

DEAN: On, uh, on, uh, Wednesday morning --

PRESIDENT: Because, what was -well, I know what was involved. What was involved was the damned executive privilege and all that crap.

DEAN: That's right. It was -The Gray things were popping, but on the,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: the Wednesday morning before I asked --

PRESIDENT: We had three conversations to my recollection.

DEAN: Oh, sir, I think we had more than that, but, of course, we'd have, uh, we'd have a record of that through

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: those people. I think we had more than that. But the, the one report where I finally -I called Bob --

PRESIDENT: [Unintelligible] this office. Good.,

DEAN: Yeah. I called Bob and I said, I said, "Bob", I said, "I don't think the President has all the facts."

PRESIDENT: That's right. And then you came and sat in this chair and that's the first time that I realized the thing.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And what -And now the question is: "Well, Mr. Dean, why didn't you tell the President before?" And your answer there is --

DEAN: I didn't know. That is absolutely correct.

PRESIDENT: That's what you told me last time. You see, I don't want you, John, to be in a position, and frankly I don't want the President to be in a position where one of his trusted people had information that he did keep, kept from him. So I just want--

DEAN: I did not know.

PRESIDENT: Fine. You did not know. "How did you find out then?" they'll ask. Okay. But you -that's your -but you can handle that.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: But I, but, but I did ask you and I think, I think you should say the President has authorized you to say this: "I won't reveal the conversation with the President, but he's -and, uh, he asked me this question. I told him this, and he, uh, uh, that nobody in the White House was involved. And then, in addition to that, that I, I, uh, to the best of my ability kept, uh --" I guess -or what do you think you ought to handle with the Presidential things?

DEAN: Well,

PRESIDENT: Maybe you better

DEAN: I, I, I think, the less said about --

PRESIDENT: All right. Fine.

DEAN: I think that's privileged, and I think [unintelligible]

PRESIDENT: Except, except that if you do this --

DEAN: I think you say anything you want to say about it.

PRESIDENT: Right. But I have to say it. Well, let me tell you, I am going to handle that properly and I just want to be sure

that it, that it, it jibes with the facts. I can say that you did tell me that nobody in the White House was involved and I can say that you then came in, at your request, and said, "I think the President needs to hear more about this case."

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And it was that time that I started my investigation.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Correct?

DEAN: That was the Wednesday before they were sentenced. Now, I can get that date, I don't have it off the top --

PRESIDENT: Would you do me this? Get your chronology of that Wednesday you came in and told me. That would be helpful for me to have.

DEAN: That's what I had in mind --

PRESIDENT: You see, I want to --

DEAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: You see, I -That's when I became interested. I was -I became frankly interested in the case and I said, "Now

God damn it, I want to find out the score." And I set in motion Ehrlichman, Mitchell and a few of -not Mitchell, but others. Okay.

DEAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: One other thing. An the privilege thing, I think, uh -Nothing, so that you could be sure, that, you know, nothing is privileged that involves wrongdoing

DEAN: That's correct.

PRESIDENT: on your part or wrongdoing on the part of anybody else. I, I, I'm telling you that now and I want you to s-when you testify, if you do, to say that the President has told you that. Would you do that?

DEAN: Yes, air.

PRESIDENT: Would you agree with that?

DEAN: I do.

PRESIDENT: Fine. However, let me say that, uh, with regard to, with regard to what we call the electronic, uh, stuff they heard in what I have now have found is in the leak area, national security area, uh, that I consider privileged.

DEAN: I do too.

PRESIDENT: And I think you should say, for example, on that -But what I meant is, uh, uh,-I would, uh. I think in, in the case of the, of the Kraft stuff, what the FBI did, they were both, I find -I've checked it back -there were some done, some done through, uh, private sources. Most of it was done through the Bureau after we got going.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Hoover didn't want to do, uh, to do Kraft. But what it involved, John, apparently was this: there were leaks in the NSC. They were in Kraft and other columns. We were trying to plug the leaks.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: And we had that, so we checked it out. Finally, we turned it over to Hoover. Then when the hullabaloo developed we didn't, we just stopped it altogether.

DEAN: I understand.

PRESIDENT: And that includes [unintelligible]. But in my, uh, view I consider that privileged.

DEAN: I have no intention of raising that in any --

PRESIDENT: Have you informed your lawyers about that?

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: I think you should not. Understand, not because of cutting anything, except that I do think it's privileged. But it's

up to, up to you, I mean, I--

DEAN: No. I think it is privileged, also.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. It's important to know, and this was necessary to use. We had Hoover do a little bit, and in control, as Lyndon Johnson [unintelligible] better. Uh, now, your, your guess as when -well, I'll ask Petersen today -when will you be called? Perhaps Tuesday, Wednesday, or--

DEAN: I would think sometime this week.

PRESIDENT: You don't think the thing is likely to break today, then, huh?

DEAN: No, I don't.

PRESIDENT: I wonder what Ziegler's got. He must have -He seems, he seems to think that something's going to go. He hasn't been in to see me. I'll have to get him in later. But, uh, well, I'll have him make -I'll ask Petersen.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Petersen. But don't you agree with me

DEAN: I don't think --

PRESIDENT: that the President should make the first announcement and not the Justice Department?

DEAN: Yes, I do.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

DEAN: [Unintelligible) on his own staff.

PRESIDENT: Uh?

DEAN: On his own staff.

PRESIDENT: Oh, hell, I'm going to make the announcement with regard to Magruder, too. God damn it, it's our campaign. I'm not going to have the Justice Department

DEAN: Oh, I see what you mean.

PRESIDENT: We triggered this whole thing. You know what I mean?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Don't you agree?

DEAN: Well, if, if, if, if -When the --

PRESIDENT: You helped trigger it.

DEAN: When history is written, you'll, and you put the pieces back together, you'll see why it happened. It's because I triggered it. I, I put everybody's feet to the fire because it just had to stop.

PRESIDENT: That's right. And you put --

DEAN: And I still continue to feel that, uh--

PRESIDENT: That's right. You put Magruder's feet to the fire.

DEAN: Yes, I did.

PRESIDENT: Where did you see Magruder? Uh

DEAN: I didn't. I sent -In fact, I refused to see him. That was one of the problems.

PRESIDENT: Oh. And that's why he --

DEAN: I started, I talked to him. I, I met with him in, in one of these outer offices out here at a meeting.

PRESIDENT: What got Magruder to talk?

DEAN: Uh --

PRESIDENT: I would like to take the credit.

DEAN: Because, because, well, uh,[laughs] he knew that --

PRESIDENT: I thought--I was hoping that you had seen him, because, uh --

DEAN: There was Well, he was, he was told, he was told (1) that, you know, there was going to be no chance--

PRESIDENT: You remember, though, when you made the statement about, uh, just making a note here about drawing the wagons up around the White House. Uh, based uh, basically you thought the primary [unintelligible] -this was talking about pre-

DEAN: Pre--

PRESIDENT: knowledge -was all in the Committee. Right?

DEAN: That's right. Where it is.

PRESIDENT: That's right. But on Magruder, come again. What's the deal, deal there?

DEAN: Uh, the, uh, uh, situation there is that he and Mitchell were continuing to talk, continuing to talk about proceeding along the same course they'd been proceeding to, to lock in their story, but my story did not fit with their story. And I just told them I refused to change, to alter my testimony, other than, than to repeat it just as I knew it.

PRESIDENT: When?

DEAN: This had to do with a number of meetings in the Department of Justice.

PRESIDENT: Incidentally I heard this [unintelligible], but I, I remember. You told me this. Everybody tells me that you said, Dean said, "I will not go to the -I am not going down there and lie," because you said you, your hand will shake and your emotion -Remember you told me that?

DEAN: Yeah. No way I could. I'm incapable of it.

PRESIDENT: Fine. Thank God, John. Don't ever do it, John. I want you to tell the truth. That's the thing that you're going to -I have told everybody around here, said, "God damn it, tell the truth." 'Cause all they do, John, is compound it.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: That son-of-a-bitch Hiss would be free today if he hadn't lied about his espionage. He could have just said he -he didn't even have to. He could've just said, "I -look, I knew, Chambers. And, yes, as a young man I was involved with some Communist activities but I broke it off many years ago." And Chambers would have dropped it.

DEAN: Well

PRESIDENT: But, the son-of-a-bitch lied, and he goes to jail for the lie rather than the crime.

DEAN: Uh --

PRESIDENT: So believe me, don't ever lie with these bastards.

DEAN: The, the truth always emerges.

PRESIDENT: We know that.

DEAN: It always does.

PRESIDENT: Also, there is a question of right and wrong, too.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: What is right and what is wrong.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Perhaps there are gray areas, but you're right to, to get it out now.

DEAN: Uh--

PRESIDENT: I'm sure. On Liddy, I wanted to be sure that I, that you recall, on our conversation, I, uh -You asked me to do something. I've left it with Petersen now. He said he'd handle it. Uh, that's the proper place --

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: You see, when Liddy says he can't talk unless he hears from higher authority--I am not his higher authority.

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: It's Mitchell.

DEAN: Well, but I think he's looking for the ultimate --

PRESIDENT: What do you think he's thinking about?

DEAN: I think he's thinking about the President.

PRESIDENT: Clemency?

DEAN: He thinks -he has the impression that you and Mitchell probably talk on the telephone daily about this.

PRESIDENT: You know we've never talked about it.

DEAN: I understand that.

PRESIDENT: I have never talked to Mitchell about this. Oh, except about when, whether we go, uh, the executive privilege thing.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: He came in and said, "Everybody should testify in executive session." Mitchell said that. Except you. Which I think would be -Listen, I think, incidentally, about executive privilege --

DEAN: I think, I think, Mr. President, the Ervin hearings

PRESIDENT: The later--

DEAN: are going to fizzle.

PRESIDENT: What?

DEAN: I think when the, when, when Petersen finishes his --

PRESIDENT: You don't think we should hold to executive privilege anyway do you, John, now?

DEAN: To hold an executive privilege?

PRESIDENT: Yeah. What's your advice on that. What should I do?

DEAN: I think, I think if you, if, if there are indictments down there in that court room, none, none of the individuals should go up and testify. I think the Watergate is just going-to be totally carved out of the Ervin hearings.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's the Watergate, right? Then the other stuff is not that important, Segretti and all that?

DEAN: Segretti, yeah.

PRESIDENT: Um huh.

DEAN: That stuff is not that important. They'll probably -They can have a lot of fun with it, but it's not very meaningful.

PRESIDENT: So you think Liddy thought that I was calling Mitchell. [Unintelligible] Good God Almighty. Well, we covered that last [unintelligible]

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: You were there.

DEAN: That's resolved. think

PRESIDENT: Is that enough?

DEAN: That's right. Petersen wi -ou if it doesn't, uh --

PRESIDENT: You tell me now if it isn't enough.

DEAN: No, I think it's enough.

PRESIDENT: I'm going to expect you to -After all, you're still the Counsel around here. [Laughter) No, but I'm serious. You've got to advise me and that's the same with Haldeman and Ehrlichman. As long as you are around here, we've got to, we got to have it out.

DEAN: Well, I, I want, I want to lay one thing out.

PRESIDENT: Uh huh.

DEAN: I think there is a mythical belief, uh, I've not talked to Bob or John about this -that they don't have a problem, Mr. President. And I'm, I'm really not sure you're convinced they do. But I'm telling you, they do.

PRESIDENT: A problem?

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: There's no question about it.

DEAN: No question.

PRESIDENT: They are --

DEAN: I just wanted

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Petersen made the point. I said, "Tell me what the facts are." And he says, "The problem is, the problem here is that they're going to get splashed." And, he said, "When they get splashed, you've got a problem, Mr. President." Now, but then he goes on to say, as far as the legal form of it is concerned, and he covers all three of you here,

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: he said, "It's a very difficult case to prove." Do you agree with that?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: You see, that's the point. And I would hope it works. I mean I'm speaking now in personal terms. I --

DEAN: It's a, it's a technical case and it's a tough case.

PRESIDENT: "It's a tough one to prove." What's he mean by that? I --

DEAN: Apparently, my, my lawyer said, "Now, I've, I've, I've won cases on this, uh, uh, with tougher facts than you've got, I'll assure you."

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: It would not, it would not be a --

PRESIDENT: See, that's their real vulnerability, together.

DEAN: It would be, uh --

PRESIDENT: Both Ehrlichman and Haldeman are in on the obstruction. And that's the point.

DEAN: That's right. I think it'd be a very good idea if they had counsel.

PRESIDENT: I told them, yeah, last night to get lawyers, so I'm one step ahead of you there. Now, do you -is there anything else you think I should do? You don't think I should -Shit, I'm not going to let the Justice Department break this case, John.

DEAN: I understand. You've got to break it. You are breaking it, in a sense.

PRESIDENT: Well, God damn it, that's what we've done.
DEAN: That's right.
PRESIDENT: I could have told you to go to Camp David and concoct a story, couldn't I?
DEAN: That's right.
PRESIDENT: And you've never heard that said, have you?
DEAN: No, sir.
PRESIDENT: In fact, I think I know [unintelligible]. But on the other hand, it was your job to tell me, wasn't it?
DEAN: Uh huh.
PRESIDENT: And you have. Basically what you've done -No, you, you've told me the truth, though. You've told me the truth. It was your job to work for the White House, the President, the White House staff, and they were not involved in the pre-thing. But then you thought about the post-thing. You thought about it and that's why you decided to -You said, "Cut it Out"

DEAN: That's why I think

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: the cancer"s growing because you

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: t-, t-, t- to keep this whole thing in.

PRESIDENT: Look, one thing I want to be sure is in here, when you testify, I don't want you to be in a position, so, and I don't want the President to be in a position that his counsel did not level with him. See my point?

DEAN: No, sir, there's no point that I have not leveled with you, as you know.

PRESIDENT: No, what I meant is, when you say, "Well, now Mr. Dean," I am speaking now

DEAN: They will, they will not ask [unintelligible]

PRESIDENT: [Unintelligible]. "Why didn't, why didn't you tell the President? Did you know about this? Why didn't you tell the President?"

DEAN: That's a PR situation, Mr. President. The U.S. Attorneys are not going to ask me question as

PRESIDENT: I see.

DEAN: to what I said to the President or what I didn't.

PRESIDENT: Will, I favor, I frankly think -I would, I would hope you could help on the PR there by

DEAN: Be expecting to help on it --

PRESIDENT: I would like for you to say, and you're free to talk about it. You're to say, "I, I told the President about this. I told the President first there was no involvement in the White House. Afterwards, I told the President that, uh, that I -And the President said, "Look, I want to get to the bottom of this thing, period." See what I'm driving at -not just the White House. You continued your investigation, and so forth. The President went ahead, investigated in his own way, which I have done.

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Believe me. I put a little pressure on

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Magruder and a few of these clowns. And, uh, "As a result of the President's action, this thing has been broken.''

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Because also I put pressure on the Justice Department. I told Kleindienst, "God damn it, that--"

DEAN: No, I think, I think you're in front right now and I, and, uh, you can rest assured everything I do will, will keep

you as far as --

PRESIDENT: No, I don't want that, understand? When I say, "Don't lie," don't lie about me either.

DEAN: No, I won't sir. You're -I, I'm not going--

PRESIDENT: 'Cause I, I, I think I've done the right thing. But I want, I want you to do it. I want you to do, if, if you feel I've done the right thing, I want, I think the country is entitled to know it. Because we're talking about the Presidency here.

DEAN: This thing has changed so dramatically, the whole situation, since I gave you the picture --

PRESIDENT: Since you sat in that chair.

DEAN: In that chair over there, and gave you what I thought were the circumstances, the potential problems, and the like, you have done nothing but try to get to the bottom of this, this thing, and,

PRESIDENT: I think so.

DEAN: and, uh, uh

PRESIDENT: Well, I said, "Write a report." But my purpose was to write a report, as I said, I want the Segretti matter, uh,

put the Segretti stuff in, put everything else in. Whether the White House -what was the White House involvement? You know. What do you say? How about one last thing: Colson. Uh, you don't think that they're going to get him into this, huh?

DEAN: I think, I think he has some technical problems -post -also. I don't know if he has any, if, uh -to the best of my knowledge, he has no, had, had no advance knowledge of the thing.

PRESIDENT: Right. I suppose the key there is Hunt, you know, the He was so close to Hunt. I just want to know about it just for my own benefit. I, as I told you last night, I, I don't want, I don't want

DEAN: Chuck has,

PRESIDENT: to be in a position -

DEAN: Chuck has,

PRESIDENT: "What about Chuck Colson?" I want--

DEAN: Chuck has sworn up and down to me

PRESIDENT: I'm going to say you, John Dean, was Colson involved?

DEAN: I have no information that he was at all.

PRESIDENT: Post?

DEAN: Technical problems.

PRESIDENT: Those two things you mentioned last night.

DEAN: That and, uh, let's face it, there's other technical problems, but, you know --

PRESIDENT: Hm. Yeah.

DEAN: It's, uh, it's, uh, all the obstruction is technical stuff that mounts up.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, you take, for example, the clemency stuff. That's solely Mitchell, apparently, and Colson's talk with, uh, Bittman where he says, "I'll do everything I can because as a, as a friend -"

DEAN: No, that was with Ehrlichman.

PRESIDENT: Huh?

DEAN: That was Ehrlichman.

PRESIDENT: Ehrlichman with who?

DEAN: Ehrlichman and Colson and I sat up there, and Colson presented his story to Ehrlichman

PRESIDENT: I know.

DEAN: regarding it and, and then John gave Chuck very clear instructions on going back and telling him that it, you know, "Give him the inference he's got clemency but don't give him any commitment."

PRESIDENT: No commitment?

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Now that's all right. But first, if an individual, if it's no commitment -I've got a right to sit here--Take a fellow like Hunt or, uh, or, or a Cuban whose wife is sick and something -that's what clemency's about.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Correct?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: But, uh, but John specifically said, "No commitment," did he? He --

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: No commitment. Then, then Colson then went on to, apparently --

DEAN: I don't know how Colson delivered it, uh,

PRESIDENT: Apparently to Bittman
DEAN: for--
PRESIDENT: Bittman. Is that your understanding?
DEAN: Yes, but I don't know what his, you know,
specific--
PRESIDENT: Where did this business of the Christmas
thing get out, John? What the hell was that?
DEAN: Well, that"s, a, that's a --
PRESIDENT: That must have been Mitchell, huh?
DEAN: No, that was Chuck, again. I think that,
uh--
PRESIDENT: That they all, that they'd all be out by
Christmas?
DEAN: No, I think he said something to the effect
that Christmas is the time that clemency
generally occurs.
PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah.
DEAN: Uh
PRESIDENT: Well, that doesn't -1, 1, 1 don't think that
is going to hurt him.
DEAN: No.
PRESIDENT: Do you?

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: "Clemency," he says -One [unintelligible] he's a friend of Hunt's. I'm just trying to put the best face on it. If it's the wrong-if it is -I've got to know.

DEAN: Well, one, one of the things I think you have to be very careful, and this is why Petersen will be very good, is, if you take a set of facts and let the prosecutors who have no -they'll be making, making no PR judgments.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: But they'll give you the raw facts as they relate to the law, uh, and it's later you've got to decide, you know, what public face will be put on it. In other words, they'll-If their --

PRESIDENT: Oh, I understand.

DEAN: It's going to come out in court, you know --

PRESIDENT: You can help on that, John.

DEAN: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: You know that --

DEAN: Uh, wherever I may be, I'll be available to help on that.

PRESIDENT: Well, I hope you're right. You think you testify when? Well, Petersen will decide that, I guess.

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Do you want me to say anything to him about it?

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: [Unintelligible] that [unintelligible] lawyers.

DEAN: Well, I think my lawyers and, and the U.S. Attorney's Office ought to continue to work in--

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I'm having him report to me daily now,

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: which I judge that I should do. And, uh, so all that I'll say is, I'm going to tell him that we had a talk today and I went over again the various materials.

DEAN: What would be the best thing in the world is if they decide that they've got nothing but technical cases against people at the White House and they chuck them all out. That's, uh, not impossible.

PRESIDENT: Should I, should I help?

DEAN: No sir.

PRESIDENT: Hah, hah. That's what they ought to hear.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: It'd be a tough case for them to prove, John.

DEAN: Well, they may decide not -I did -not do it and then nothing, none of these things are even released. It could very well happen.

PRESIDENT: Well, that's what I want. I mean, I -Understand, the reason I have to have that is in case there's a break tonight. I don't want to have to call John Dean in Ad say, "Look, John, can I have it?" It looks like I was What the Christ am I doing. I, I've got to know because I do have some knowledge that there might be vulnerability. All that I am saying with this, as you know,

DEAN: [Clears throat]

PRESIDENT: is that I have heard things from the U.S. Attorney, and from John Dean, and from my own people that indicate there could be a technical violation, that there could be, there could be obstru -Under the circumstances, I feel that it's my duty to have your resignation in hand. Of course, the President always has a resignation.

DEAN: Well, uh --

PRESIDENT: How does that sound to you?

DEAN: That's right. The, the thing is the phrasing in the letter, uh, is important.

PRESIDENT: All right.

DEAN: You don't cause anybody, you know, problems with a fair trial. So that's why I'd like to --

PRESIDENT: Good, John. Well, that's right. I mean, that's -understand, those are my dictations. I just [unintelligible]

DEAN: I understand.

PRESIDENT: Only it's, only it's a form for you. And you, you work it out and work it out so that it would be one that could apply to you and then work out the -and to, uh, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, anybody else.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: Just a form that I can give anybody. Strachan -No, he's not going.

DEAN: Yes, he's gone. USIA.

PRESIDENT: Well, that doesn't come to me does it?

DEAN: Well, the whole Executive Branch, is, huh--

PRESIDENT: No, well, no, I mean,

DEAN: No, it wouldn't come--

PRESIDENT: his resignation can be submitted to Keogh.

DEAN: That's right, Keogh.

PRESIDENT: Well, I'll get his resignation. And I'll tell -I don't mean about -I'll tell those guys that he, uh-

DEAN: I would have -I don't think you ought to tell Strachan. I think --

PRESIDENT: No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Tell Keogh he ought to ask for the resignation.

DEAN: I think Bob ought to do that, though.

PRESIDENT: Bob Haldeman?

DEAN: Uh huh.

PRESIDENT: Good. I'll tell him; I'll tell Bob then to get them. That'll, that'll be Strachan and, uh, Magruder coming up. That'll be it.

DEAN: All right, sir.

PRESIDENT: All right. That's your, your advice. Oh, also if you do have any random thoughts on, uh, how many more we could do on the presentation of this thing, sit over in your office and think of it, I mean, as to how to handle the --

DEAN: Well, I want you to --

PRESIDENT: So that the President is in front, you know what I mean.

DEAN: I want, I want, I want to give you some, some notes on that, that I think will help.

PRESIDENT: Would you do that?

DEAN: Yes sir. I will.

PRESIDENT: The record. Here's what I've done. Here's what I've done, and what you think the President ought to do and when--you see what I mean? And then, if we have to use these things -I pray to God we don't, 'cause you guys don't deserve it. You don't deserve it.

DEAN: Well, at least, the important thing is that it's not them, it's you.

PRESIDENT: No, well, I know, maybe it isn't me personally, it's this place.

DEAN: Well, it's the Office, and, uh, the campaign office as well.

PRESIDENT: All right. Remember, be back.

DEAN: All right, sir.

PRESIDENT: I would, uh, I'd just, just, just hang tightly.

DEAN: I couldn't, I couldn't be,

PRESIDENT: Hang tightly.

DEAN: I couldn't be more objective, Mr. President. And, you

know, I just have -don't think I've lost my objectivity in this thing at all.

PRESIDENT: What?

DEAN: I said, don't think I've lost my objectivity at all in this,

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: even though I'm right at the peak on it. All right, sir.

PRESIDENT: Good enough.