

TRANSCRIPT OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON
APRIL 12, 1973 FROM 9:47 TO 9:59 AM

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PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN, ON APRIL 17,
1973, FROM 9:47 TO 9:59 A.M.

(Door Closing in Background)

HALDEMAN: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Uh, hello. I, uh, sit down, that's all right, fine, I was thinking that, uh, that (unintelligible) we possibly ought to use John Connally in the meantime, maybe (unintelligible) more to try to hammer out, uh, what our, what our strategy is here on Watergate. Rose, I'm sorry, I didn't intend, I didn't intend, just wait for the Italian. I'll call you later.

WOODS: Okay.

PRESIDENT: I was, I was buzzing you, I don't know. Thank you, Robe, I'll get you later. (Door closes). And, uh, --

HALDEMAN: The only question there would be whether we ought to meet earlier on the basis

PRESIDENT: Meet?

HALDEMAN: that, well, we'll we--

PRESIDENT: I can meet anytime you can, except I got the Italian for awhile.

HALDEMAN: Well, yeah.

PRESIDENT: I could meet at 12:30. Let's see, I could meet, uh, no, uh, after that, 12:30, uh, I o'clock.

HALDEMAN: The reason being, uh and the only reason, uh that there is felt to be, and we may not want to react to it) but we may, there's felt to be, Colson, for instance, called Ehrlichman this morning and said that, uh, his sources you know, around town and everything, uh, say that we've got one more day to act on our, our initiative.

(Privileged Material Deleted).

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HALDEMAN: Uh, that, uh, this, all these breaks, this breaking-in stuff's

PRESIDENT: All over town.

HALDEMAN: and, uh, uh

PRESIDENT: So we may have to go today?

HALDEMAN: that you have also have, have, you saw the L.A. Times has a story

PRESIDENT: About?

HALDEMAN: the White House has got to

PRESIDENT: Yes. Yeah.

HALDEMAN: move, and the thought came that if we're going to move today, we probably ought to meet earlier, so that we're ready to move by 3:00

PRESIDENT: Fine.

HALDEMAN: 3:30 or something.

PRESIDENT: Okay. If you get, uh, get together. I think we have to move today.

HALDEMAN: Well, if we look like we, we ought to move on something, if we've got anything

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...just to get out front in some way.

PRESIDENT: Well, you might have to, might have to give them a full report today, the way it's breaking so fast. Let me say that the problem you've got here is that, I had a long talk with Rogers, and so forth, of course he was much more rational than Len is. Len's supposedly quite a pro, but, on the other hand, uh, 1, you've got the problem of being, you and John being sort of nibbled to death over a period of time,

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: an, uh, by not moving, having a situation where, frankly, your, your chances of your being, I mean of your, uh, being publicly attacked, and also even the, even the steam of the prosecution is greater. You know what I mean. It's a curious thing, but that's, but I'm afraid that's the way it operates. Uh, we, uh, you know, every day there's, uh, there's, uh, some other damn little thing that somebody's talks around with, don't you see, so everything can be explained and try to defend and all that sort of thing. But, uh, I'm not prepared to make that judgment and, uh, I want you talk to John about it.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Okay.

PRESIDENT: Get a line on what the prosecutors, Petersen (unintelligible with tape noise), Petersen (unintelligible) Ehrlichman was informed by Dean of a meeting that Dean had with Liddy on the 19th of June, well actually, this was, that was done when he was in California in January but, irrelevant, it was later anyway, that kind of thing, just keep banging around, banging around, you know that prosecution gets out the damn stuff. Did, did John talk with you about it?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, he mentioned it, and, uh,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Dean did tell us that story up in Ehrlichman's office last week or two weeks ago.

PRESIDENT: But not to go through this?

HALDEMAN: I don't think so.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I think I mentioned it to you, remember. I described the story to you in some detail when lie walked down 17th Street--

PRESIDENT: No. This was all after we had started our own investigation.

HALDEMAN: Oh, yeah.

PRESIDENT: I mean, it wasn't back then. It wouldn't indicate that we knew about all this, and so forth. Another thing. (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: And also (unintelligible) John Dean (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: John, and you get, uh, sit down and do some hard thinking about what kind of strategy you are going to have with the money. You know what I mean.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's got to be something perhaps better than say, well, either one of the defendants can talk to the press and I don't, what in the hell the strategy is I think you ought to talk about that, but, uh, I'm a little concerned about the last bite or two, the one twenty-seven don't know who, who talked about that one, but, uh, to Hunt, Hunt's lawyer.

HALDEMAN: Oh.

PRESIDENT: Who's, who was the one that made that original--

HALDEMAN: Dean. Bittman dealing directly to Dean on that.

PRESIDENT: Right. Right. Then Dean came in and asked us, and what happened?

HALDEMAN: We said we didn't know what to do about it, and we said that's, you know, that's something that, that obviously Mitchell should be taking care of.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, in any case, taking care of.

HALDEMAN: And, and then they,

PRESIDENT: But...

HALDEMAN: ... indicated in the meeting with us

PRESIDENT: Yeah

HALDEMAN: ...the next day (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). On the other hand, that, of course, indicates knowledge and so forth.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Uh, look, you've got to call Kalmbach so I want to be sure. I've been trying to try to find out from Dean what the hell lie is going to say lie told Kalmbach. What did Kalmbach say that Dean told him, they wanted money for this support purpose?

HALDEMAN: I don't know, John is talking to Kalmbach.

PRESIDENT: Well, be sure that Kalmbach is at least aware of this. Uh. LaRue has talked very freely. He's a broken man. And, uh, the other thing is that this destruction of the evidence thing is troublesome, of course. John tells me, too, uh and basically the culprit is Pat Gray. Has Colson talked, know about that? That's why Colson calling, Colson, Colson was caught because Colson was in the room when it was handed to Gray.

HALDEMAN: No, lie wasn't. Well, apparently lie wasn't.

PRESIDENT: He says he wasn't?

HALDEMAN: Colson thought there was a meeting before that, where they talked about the deep-sixing and all that supposedly

PRESIDENT: He was in that meeting?

HALDEMAN: which Colson was supposed to have been in.

PRESIDENT: Right. Right. Right.

HALDEMAN: Colson doesn't remember being in it, but Colson flatly says that he had, that he, there was never anything where he was where there was a discussion...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...of Hunt getting out of the country.

PRESIDENT: Alright.

HALDEMAN: Kehrli says the same thing. He was also supposed to be at that same meeting. In fact, Ehrlichman has checked everybody who was at that meeting and nobody recalls that being said except Dean. And we now have the point that Dean is the one who called Liddy and told him to telephone uh, Hunt to get out of the country and then called him later and said not to. (Pause).

PRESIDENT: Get this, get, I'd like a policy, I think you've got to get a policy story on Monday. I think, Bob, though, we have to think, I must say that I haven't, that, that we've got to think about a positive move, uh, and I think it's got to be today.

HALDEMAN: I agree.

PRESIDENT: I think it should be at 3:00 today. Uh, the important thing, which I don't know, is, uh, I hope the story doesn't break today, but, uh--

HALDEMAN: Even if it does, you can get into cycle with it.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, I don't want to be answering it.

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: **RESTRICTED-"B"**

I want a, I want a thing done today and uh, you and John have got to think, frankly, in terms, let me say, not don't just think in terms as a national good for the, well, the President and all that crap (unintelligible/**REMOVED**), but also you got to think in terms of having this God damn thing continue to be dragged out bit by bit on answers that are dragged out bit by bit, anyway, I suppose. But, uh, the point is that, uh, Dean's incentive with the U.S. Attorney, incentive with everybody else will be this and that. You get my point?

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HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: I'm sure you and John have talked about it. (15 Second Pause). You see, what's happened here, the prosecution has been pretty clever. They got Magruder, well, Magruder just, just caved, but it had to come, it had to come, Bob. There was no way it wasn't going to come.

HALDEMAN: Right. There have been some (unintelligible). I think, I think it had to and should.

PRESIDENT: That's right. The other point is, the other element of this question how is Hunt, and as far as Dean is concerned, he's basically the one that surprises me and disappoints me to an extent, because he really is trying to save his neck and doing so easy. He's not, to hear him tell it when I talked to him, he's not telling things that are, you know (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That's not really true though. He is.

PRESIDENT: I know, I know, I know. He tells me one thing and tells the others other things. That's when I get mad. But, Dean is, Dean is trying to tell them enough to get immunity, that's frankly what it is Bob.

HALDEMAN: That's the real problem we've got. It had to break and it should break,

PRESIDENT: That's a hell of a problem to break.

HALDEMAN: but what you've got is people within it, as you said right at the beginning

PRESIDENT: Thanks a lot.

HALDEMAN: with Petersen, they've got an incentive to exaggerate. So, they've been told the more they give them the better they'll come out.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, I got to go. I'll, I'll be ready by 1:00.

HALDEMAN: Okay.