

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A MEETING
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND H.R. HALDEMAN ON
APRIL 20, 1973 FROM 8:15 TO 8:39 A.M.

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PRESIDENT: I don't know whether we can do anything about getting the Grand Jury process speeded up.

HALDEMAN: It's strange thing, I, it's hard to figure what they're doing. I guess they're so...

PRESIDENT: Well, they got (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Yeah, they're so inundated with all this side bar stuff that, you know, they lob in these six pieces of, of, uh, (laughs) material.

PRESIDENT: Look, I see this morning, says the lawyer says that we have Watergate bugging stuff.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: So.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: The other guy on the staff wanted the legal, and apparently it was delivered before he was charged, so, uh, it was an obstruction of justice. Did he stick it out? I was just curious as to how the hell it got out of here.

HALDEMAN: If that applies, the lawyer cautioned John on, on that, uh, they have that one case on John Connally, that they, uh,

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...'Cept (cough) that he said there's, God, it's complex.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. I know that but let me say that on that, or far as we know about the (unintelligible) nobody here knew anything about it. I, I never heard about it. Have you heard anything about Haldeman's crap out?

HALDEMAN: No, sir.

PRESIDENT: Uh, did you think Colson swears he ain't heard about--

HALDEMAN: I don't know, uh, (unintelligible) sums up.

PRESIDENT: Well, Dean's story is predictable.

HALDEMAN: Well, I'm not really sure what Dean's story is. It, well, yeah, for sure that he is saying there were higher ups and lower downs also involved. He, he's determined he's not going to be alone.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: And, uh, the Post modified the story 'cause they ran a---see, originally they were saying Haldeman engineered the cover up the operation.

PRESIDENT: They can't say that.

HALDEMAN: Now they said Haldeman and others in the White House were involved in the cover-up, which at least is not quite as ...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...as, uh...

PRESIDENT: That's the point about the lawyers...
(Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: They've been accused of trying to go into that one with quite a summary and they said, well, it's a question of the intent to turn over the truth (unintelligible) you object?

HALDEMAN: Well, if it's a question intent, then, then there's no problem.

PRESIDENT: If you had knowledge, of course, you might, you might admit it, but you (unintelligible) They said they needed money, you said all right, turn it over to LaRue.
(Unintelligible) Strachan (unintelligible) wouldn't you say-Strachan?

HALDEMAN: Strachan, yeah, Strachan, I would guess, had less knowledge than I did, I mean, I think he...

PRESIDENT: What about the money? Did he turn it over...

HALDEMAN: He turned it over, but I don't think he had any knowledge of why he was turning it...

PRESIDENT: Let me ask you about one conversation. The only thing that troubles me about this is my own recollection of a conversation with Dean(unintelligible) that last, that what, where you were with him when he said that Bittman had stated that he needed money for Dean's attorney's fees at \$40,000.

HALDEMAN: I think--I can't figure out when that was and I can't find any notes on it.

PRESIDENT: Were you in the room with them?

HALDEMAN: I thought I was, but the meeting that you had for, and according to your log, that you had where I was in the room with Dean, it was an hour, I mean 110 minute, 2 hour meeting...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...with Dean, but it was in the morning.

PRESIDENT: Well.

HALDEMAN: I can't know why, but I distinctly have the feeling that the meeting that I remember was in the evening and I remember discu...

PRESIDENT: But you do remember talking about that, with the...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, that with the, with the thing.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I do.

PRESIDENT: Now, I was there. Do you remember where the million dollars, where I said how long would it take to, uh, take it?

HALDEMAN: I remember it was general discussion, you know, kind of running out the string.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: But did Dean as well say that I said, "Well, let's go get the money?"

HALDEMAN: Oh, no. I don't think so.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, because basically, I was very, as I told you, I was prepared to be of assistance. I said, "Christ, turn over any of the cash we got." You know what I mean?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) coverup.

PRESIDENT: I, just thinking at the moment, trying to hold the line. We've got our own ducks to roll.

HALDEMAN: Well, you, you may have said something about, you know, well, you know when he said they had to have the money. You, you may have said something about, well, that we ought to be able to get

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...we ought to be able to get the money, but...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...but then we got into the thing with running out the string.

PRESIDENT: But--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible), you know, the, the--

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Uh, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Basically what the issue is whether we could get the money quite (unintelligible). We didn't, uh, you, uh, Dean, and uh, what, how, bow did it eventually get back to Mitchell so that he did that?

HALDEMAN: I don't know.

PRESIDENT: Well, Bob, you were in the mom and Mitchell was there.

HALDEMAN: But I--Mitchell wasn't there.

PRESIDENT: No, but when it was discussed in your office. Do you remember that?

HALDEMAN: My office? The only thing that was discussed we were in general meeting on, on the others, not that point, and Mitchell had a, an interrupted point and then Dean come in (unintelligible). Mitchell had a whole list of things.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) covered (unintelligible) long even there.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: We got a chance, but didn't relate to the general subject, basics of it. He said to Dean, I'm not sure of the words, but in effect, what he'd done about the...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...the Hunt thing...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...or that other problem.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, right.

HALDEMAN: Something that--it was clear to all of us, that, what he was talking about, but it was not spelled out in any detail, uh. "What have you done about it" and Dean looked kind of puzzled and he said, "Well, uh, I don't know." Then, then he just kind of, like that--And, uh, Mitchell says, "Oh, I guess it's taken care of" and we just-nobody asked any more questions, or, or...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...gave any more answers. That was the extent of it and we assumed from that thing that Mitchell had it under control, whatever he's supposed...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) in effect Dean imparted knowledge to me among others, uh, that the, uh, Bittman, uh, had uh, you know, wanted the money. Did I...

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Two, two, two places where others, if they had knowledge is (unintelligible) Colson should have come in and said, "Well, Hunt wanted money that might have meant (unintelligible) there's no problem because I handled it right." In this case.

HALDEMAN: That was, uh...

PRESIDENT: You remember?

HALDEMAN: ...that was in January, I guess, apparently because...

PRESIDENT: Oh, m, no, no. Shortly after the campaign, you know, that's what he said before Christmas, but, whatever it was...

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HALDEMAN: But, uh, on this one I don't see that you have any problem at all. In the first place, at that time you were in the investigation of the case. You were probing, you know, all directions with everybody you could get...

PRESIDENT: That's correct.

HALDEMAN: ...and everything, everything you could get, with no obligation to move in at any fixed time, only an obligation to, to, uh, work this thing out. Uh, the other factor in that is that, that was clearly, distinctly as the threat was relayed, was related to national security. Because Hunt specifically said he needed this or he was gonna spill beans on...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: ...on the stuff did for Ehrlichman, and that, as you instantly knew, uh, anything he did for Ehrlichman was involved in the national security project over here.

PRESIDENT: And we couldn't pay blackmail for that.

HALDEMAN: And we didn't.

PRESIDENT: Well, we're talking...

HALDEMAN: You didn't...

PRESIDENT: We're talking about, I guess, oh, I don't know. I don't know how much we should be talking about any of this.

HALDEMAN: I don't think Dean's gonna do that, uh, I don't think it's going to come out at all. It's privileged conversation, that's for sure.

PRESIDENT: That for sure. The reason, you see, that I...

HALDEMAN: Whatever was done, it was done by Mitchell. He lobbed it down here.

PRESIDENT: Right. The reason I, the reason I want to let you know that, uh (unintelligible) what happened with Bittman, got a hold of Dean (unintelligible) the reason that strategy didn't work. The reason I want you to know, the reason I had to treat Dean, you know, as Ehrlichman, you know in the meantime wanted me to fire him on Monday because of his resignation. You've got to remember that he has sat here and talked at great length tone about this damn case and he wanted a reason. You know he was desperate to see what he could do. You don't agree?

HALDEMAN: You were investigating him then. You were trying to get out of him at that point--the first place, at that point you had no reason to believe him. Because, you now have found, was lying on various things so what you had, you couldn't back him on that he told you. You could merely receive what he told you to determine and then, then check that out against other things.

PRESIDENT: Well, we say he was lying about, in our fairness to him we have to say (unintelligible) for us that he was doing it. 'Cause I had told him on several occasions, "You've sure done a hell of a job here. You've done a good job."

HALDEMAN: Well--

PRESIDENT: I wasn't speaking, I wasn't speaking to the job held done on the, on raising money. I was thinking of the way he handled all...

HALDEMAN: That's right. Which we thought he had, but now you point out that there was, that he was playing a double game, apparently.

PRESIDENT: I think probably, (unintelligible), the money raising. I guess we didn't know he was doing that. Yes, I guess we did know it.

HALDEMAN: Oh, no, we knew he was doing something.

PRESIDENT: We knew he was pressing on, you mean, like, for example, the activating of Kalmbach, which is, he produced you in that, right?

HALDEMAN: No question about that. We told the lawyers and they have no trouble with it.

PRESIDENT: They, what they just said, "That's all right. You didn't do anything."

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Could they be asked permission? Said okay. (pause) Well, the lawyers said we're gonna have to think about it over the weekend. I think it's just great you, John and families-I want you all to move to Camp David and use it.

HALDEMAN: Well, it's very nice.

PRESIDENT: Use the nice one.

HALDEMAN: I don't know whether that'll-I think we just have to see what, what we need. The first thing (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: --is to get out of your house, if you can

HALDEMAN: Yeah, yeah, well this God damned press had me straddled there last night.

PRESIDENT: Oh, shit. I don't see what--

HALDEMAN: Do it every morning. But, uh, the, uh, that's no problem, that, that...

PRESIDENT: Yeah, sure.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Well, be free to go, Bob.

HALDEMAN: The main thing, what I'm trying to go at this in an orderly way, 'cause we've been kind of dashing around...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and we've got to get...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: We've got to perfect and solidify our legal base...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...and then, I hope to get that done fast...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...and uh, work with these guys to get it done...

PRESIDENT: Good.

HALDEMAN: ...so we know exactly where we are, what our problems are, what our--what our strengths are.

PRESIDENT: Take them with you to Camp David.

HALDEMAN: Only thing I say come up (unintelligible) Roger will come down (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: No, take him up.

HALDEMAN: But, uh, we'll, uh, (unintelligible). once that is settled, then I want a turn to trying to, to...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)--public relations-

HALDEMAN: ...work a public plan out and work out all these kinks, and, and look down the road because I think we can, we can, uh...

PRESIDENT: Do better.

HALDEMAN: ...deal with that effectively, too. And I, uh...

PRESIDENT: Can I ask you one thing? Could you do something to (unintelligible) let's get a line on this money thing. Return to saying God dammit, it's all right.

HALDEMAN: But we have to...

PRESIDENT: You've got to say that, you've got to say, "Yes, money was raised for the (unintelligible) worked for the Committee and they, they worked. They were in trouble and they were entitled to legal counsel (unintelligible) assistance." That's what the purpose of it was.

HALDEMAN: But that's why we've gotta get the legal claims. They lawyers (noise) (unintelligible) and they've gotta figure out where there's any legal problems with them. Just, uh, raise (noise)the question (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I'd rather be on the offensive on that. Say, if you can, just to say, "Yes, money was raised." Obviously the money was raised so why did they put it on the doorstep? Well, that's the way it was given to Mrs. Hunt. That was the way she handled it. Raised the cash for that purpose.

HALDEMAN: Well, you gotta separate--in the first place, we, as far as I know, we were involved in the raising of very little money, 'cause all we were held with the raising of was, was, okaying Kalmbach. And I think that was not very much money, I don't know.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Uh...

PRESIDENT: Except...

HALDEMAN: The other thing, as we were, I was I involved in the moving of the 350...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ... which was, in my view, and under advice of counsel, worked out in order to put money where it belonged. Now I sure as hell knew, and I can't argue that, uh...

PRESIDENT: That they needed money.

HALDEMAN: ...that they needed money. That, that was a way to persuade them to, to, to take this money-Work out a way of handling the receipt of this money. What they did with it, I haven't any idea.

PRESIDENT: I'm glad Mitchell at least is having the good sense to come clean to the (unintelligible) extent of the fact you had knowledge, uh, the three you saw in "Time" this morning.

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Well, he, he admitted, he did have three meetings

HALDEMAN: Oh, really?

PRESIDENT: ... He's going to testify today-but that he had turned it off...

HALDEMAN: Well, then that's true.

PRESIDENT: ...and rejected the plan. I think you may have two consummate lawyers here, Dean and Magruder.

HALDEMAN: Well...

PRESIDENT: Magruder I'm sure.

HALDEMAN: Well, except it's not your thing (unintelligible) (noise) 'cause Magruder states that press sources can still be botched up. Magruder still has that story of going down to Key Biscayne.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Now, there were two meetings and Mitchell knows Dean...

PRESIDENT: And Mgruder(unintelligible).
(Noise)

HALDEMAN: See, that's why Mitchell sent Liddy
(unintelligible) 'cause
Liddy(unintelligible)Magruder, who was at
the third meeting. The third meeting being
Key Biscayne.

PRESIDENT: How does Mitchell keep quiet?

HALDEMAN: Dean, Dean wasn't at that. And I think,
apparently, see they had Liddy over there
yesterday

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

HALDEMAN: ...and he wouldn't talk.

PRESIDENT: Is that right?

HALDEMAN: In spite of your signal.

PRESIDENT: I did my job.

HALDEMAN: Your're supposed to. (laughs)

PRESIDENT: And that's why Dean wanted me to get him to
talk. I did my job. The U.S. Attorneys
know. I'm glad I did.

HALDEMAN: I'm glad you did, to. (Pause) Well, well
just step...

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: Well, I really--we need to get the money
back. Get out ahead of it. Get a line on
it. And, uh, we need to get, I hope I can
get (unintelligible) on the whole thing. I
don't know if they'll let me. Work out a
way to get out (unintelligible). I'd like
to--with all this stuff that's busting. Now,
I'd like to, sort of, just bust the whole
thing loose. Lay it out and then see what
happens.

PRESIDENT: Say that, (unintelligible) you say that, uh,
the President's suggesting that you would-be
perfectly willing--in other words the idea,
the, uh, that now

PRESIDENT: the case(unintelligible) could knock off.
(CONT.) This time give the reasons for this time because of this and that. Now here are the facts.

HALDEMAN: That, I've gotta say that, that, I, these are the facts as I know them (unintelligible) my situation. I see, I used to be worried about having to be told to testify about hearsay. I'm no longer worried about that because I now find the hearsay I was given, some of it was clearly not true. In other words, even the people I was relying about weren't telling the truth.

PRESIDENT: I, I'm not talking about that.

HALDEMAN: So, I don't know--I was--all I say is I don't know what, what, what the facts are involved with this, whether I have to talk or not, I, there's no question about, about the Presidential communications.

PRESIDENT: Do you feel that, uh, that clearly is designed to--

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) said he didn't (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Do you feel that, uh, I think still provides for your employer, don't you?

HALDEMAN: Absolutely.

PRESIDENT: That's the story everyday, isn't it?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but that's there's going to be a story everyday and there's no point in reading...

PRESIDENT: Well (unintelligible), but, uh...

HALDEMAN: I know, but, but, it...

PRESIDENT: You say anything about (unintelligible)

HALDEMAN: It's, it's, there I was just talking to Timmons, who, uh...

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PRESIDENT: Talked, huh?

HALDEMAN: You know, we've got a good crew around here (unintelligible). Well, we, I understand you, you wanta help.

PRESIDENT: Except for (unintelligible) they all wanta help (unintelligible).

(unintelligible conversation/**REMOVED**)