

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

D—John W. Dean, III
E—John D. Ehrlichman
H—H. R. Haldeman
LH—Lawrence Higby
K—Richard G. Kleindienst
M—John N. Mitchell
OPR—Operator
P—Richard M. Nixon
HP—Henry Petersen
R—William P. Rogers
S—Frank Strickler
W—John J. Wilson
Z—Ronald L. Ziegler

The initials to the left of each name identify who is speaking

EOB—Executive Office Building
WH—White House

Publisher's Note: The unnumbered headings before each Appendix and the headnotes preceding the text of each Appendix were written by The New York Times and do not appear in the "Submission of Recorded Presidential Conversations to the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives" by President Richard Nixon.

Appendix 1. Meeting: The President, Haldeman and Dean, Oval Office, September 15, 1972. (5:27–6:17 p.m.)

On Sept. 15, 1972, the seven men arrested in connection with the break-in at Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington were indicted by a Federal grand jury. Later that day, there was a meeting in the Oval Office where White House strategy on other investigations related to Watergate was the subject. It was at this meeting, John Dean later told the Senate Watergate committee, that he first spoke to the President about Watergate. During the discussion, the role of the F.B.I. was brought up and there was talk about possible ways of "turning off" Representative Wright Patman's Banking and Currency Committee hearings on campaign irregularities.

This opens just as Dean comes in the door.

P—Hi, how are you? You had quite a day today, didn't you? You got Watergate on the way, didn't you?

D—We tried.

H—How did it all end up?

D—Ah, I think we can say well at this point. The press is playing it just as we expect.

H—Whitewash?

D—No, not yet—the story right now—

P—It is a big story

H—Five indicted plus the WH former guy and all that.

D—Plus two White House fellows

H—That is good that takes the edge off whitewash really that was the thing Mitchell kept saying that to people in the country Liddy and Hunt were big men. Maybe that is good.

P—How did MacGregor handle himself?

D—I think very well he had a good statement which said that the Grand Jury had met and that it was now time to realize that some apologies may be due.

H—Fat chance.

D—Get the damn (inaudible)

H—We can't do that.

P—Just remember, all the trouble we're taking, we'll have a chance to get back one day. How are you doing on your other investigations?

H—What has happened on the bug?

P—What bug?

D—The second bug there was a bug found in the telephone of one of the men at the DNC.

P—You don't think it was left over from the other time?

D—Absolutely not, the Bureau has checked and re-checked the whole place after that night. The man had specifically checked and re-checked the telephone and it was not there.

P—What the hell do you think was involved?

D—I think DNC was planted.

P—You think they did it?

D—Uh huh

P—(Expletive deleted)—do they really want to believe that we planted that?

H—Did they get anything on the finger prints?

D—No, nothing at all—either on the telephone or on the bug. The FBI has unleashed a full investigation over at the DNC starting with O'Brien right now.

H—Laughter. Using the same crew—

D—The same crew—the Washington Field Office.

P—What kind of questions are they asking him?

D—Anything they can think of because O'Brien is charging them with failing to find all the bugs.

H—Good, that will make them mad.

D—So Gray is pissed and his people are pissed off. So maybe they will move in because their reputation is on the line. I think that is a good development.

P—I think that is a good development because it makes it look so (adjective deleted) funny. Am I wrong?

D—No, no, sir. It looks silly. If we can find that the DNC planted that, the whole story will reverse.

P—But how could they possibly find it, though?

D—Well, they are trying to ascertain who made the bug. It is a custom made product. If they can get back to the man who manufactured it and who he sold it to and how it came down through the chain.

P—Boy, you never know when those guys get after it—they can really find it.

D—The resources that have been put against this whole investigation to date are really incredible. It is truly a larger investigation than was conducted against the after inquiry of the JFK assassination.

P—Oh.

D—Good statistics supporting the finding.

H—Isn't that ridiculous—this silly thing.

P—Yes (Expletive deleted). Goldwater put it in context when he said, "(expletive deleted) everybody bugs everybody else. You know that."

D—That was priceless.

P—It happens to be totally true. We were bugged in '68 on the plane and in '62 even running for Governor—(expletive deleted) thing you ever saw.

D—It is a shame that evidence to the fact that that happened in '68 was never around. I understand that only the former Director had that information.

H—No, that is not true.

D—There was evidence of it?

H—There are others who have information.

P—How do you know? Does DeLoache know?

D—DeLoache?

H—I have some stuff too—on the bombing incident and too in the bombing halt stay.

P—The difficulty with using it, of course, is it reflects on Johnson. If it weren't for that, I would use it. Is there any way we could use it without using his name—saying that the DNC did it? No—the FBI did the bugging.

D—That is the problem—would it reflect on Johnson or Humphrey?

H—Johnson. Humphrey didn't do it.

P—Oh, hell no.

H—He was bugging Humphrey, too.

P—(Expletive deleted)

P—Well, on the other hand. I want you to ask Connally. What crazy things we do. That this might help with the bombing. I don't think he will talk to Johnson—and also it would reflect on the Bureau. They hate to admit that.

H—It is a rough one on them with all this stuff that they don't do Congressmen, etc.

P—It isn't worth it—the hell with it. What is the situation on the little red box? Have they found the box yet?

D—Gray has never had access to the box. He is now going to pursue the box. I spoke to him just about thirty minutes ago. Pat said, "I don't know about the box. Don't know where it is now. We never had an opportunity before when it was first released in the press that there was a box to go in, but we have decided now we have grounds to go in and find it."

H—The latest public story was that she handed it over to Edward Bennett Williams.

D—That is right.

H—The Bureau ought to go into Edward Bennett Williams and start questioning him and have him tied up for a couple of days.

P—Yeah, I hope they do. The Bureau better get over pretty quick and get that little red box. We want it cleared up. We want to get to the bottom of it. If any body is guilty over here we want to know.

H—It will probably be in the news!

D—You might be interested in some of the allocations we got. The Stans' libel action was assigned to Judge Ritchie.

P—(Expletive deleted)

D—Well now that is good and bad. Judge Ritchie is not known to be one of the (inaudible) on the bench, that is considered by me. He is fairly candid in dealing with people about the question. He has made several entrees off the bench—one to Kleindienst and one to Roemer McPhee to keep Roemer abreast of what his thinking is. He told Roemer he thought Maury ought to file a libel action.

P—Did he?

H—Can he deal with this concurrently with the court case?

D—Yeah. The fact that the civil case drew to a halt—that the depositions were halted he is freed.

H—It was just put off for a few days, wasn't it?

D—It did more than that—he had been talking to Silbert, one of the Assistant U.S. Attorneys down here.

Silbert said, "We are going to have a hell of a time drawing these indictments because these civil depositions will be coming out and the Grand Jury has one out on this civil case but it is nothing typical."

Someone asked the President if he wanted Mitchell's call—he said, "Yeah."

D—Based on that when Silbert had told Ritchie this and with a casual encounter—in fact it was just in the hall, so Ritchie stopped the civil case so Silbert can get the indictment down.

Telephone call from John Mitchell: Hello. P—comments only from here on until end of call: Well, are you still alive. I was just sitting here with John Dean and he tells me you were going to be sued or something. Good, Good. Yeah. Good. Sure. Well. I tell you just don't let this keep you or your colleagues from concentrating on the big game. This thing is just one of those side issues and a month later everybody looks back and wonders what all the shooting was about. OK, John. Good night. Get a good night's sleep. And don't bug anybody without asking me? OK? Yeah. Thank you."

D—Three months ago I would have had trouble predicting there would be a day when this would be forgotten, but I think I can say that 54 days from now nothing is going to come crashing down to our surprise.

P—That what?

D—Nothing is going to come crashing down to our surprise.

P—Oh well, this is a can of worms as you know a lot of this stuff that went on. And the people who worked this way are awfully embarrassed. But the way you have handled all this seems to me has been very skillful putting your fingers in the leaks that have sprung here and sprung there. The Grand Jury is dismissed now?

D—That is correct. They have completed and they have let them go so there will be no continued investigation prompted by the Grand Jury's inquiry. The GAO report referred over to Justice is on a shelf right now because they have hundreds of violations—they have violations of McGovern, of Humphrey, violations of Jackson, and several hundred Congressional viola-

tions. They don't want to start prosecuting one any more than they prosecute the other.

P—They definitely will not prosecute us unless they prosecute the others.

D—Well, we are talking about technical violations referred over also.

P—What about watching the McGovern contributors and all that sort of thing?

D—We have (inaudible) eye out on that. His I understand is not in full compliance.

P—He asked?

D—No.

P—Well, not yet. His 300 committees—have they all reported yet?

D—We have a couple delinquent state committees.

P—It said in the paper that McGovern had 300 committees reported.

D—No, they have not. There are a lot of things he has never done—as he has never disclosed the fact that he has some 300 committees. The Wall Street Journal piece that picked it up and carried that story brought out his committees.

P—Can we say anything publicly about it?

D—Purpose there hasn't been a tax sham—it is hard to comprehend why he set up that many committees. He doesn't have that many large contributors, but they may have to disburse through a great number of smaller committees.

H—Unless someone is stealing \$900,000.

D—That's right.

P—It could be. That could be possible.

H—He may be getting \$900,000 from somebody. He may have two or three angels.

P—I don't think he is getting a hell of a lot of small money. I don't believe (expletive deleted) Have you had the P.O. checked yet?

H—That is John's area. I don't know.

P—Well, let's have it checked.

D—Well as I see it, the only problems we may have are the human problems and I will keep a close watch on that.

P—Union?

D—Human.

H—Human frailties.

D—People get annoyed—some finger pointing—false accusations—any internal dissension of any nature.

P—You mean on this case?

D—On this case. There is some bitterness between the Finance Committee and the Political Committee—they feel they are taking all the heat and all the people upstairs are bad people—not being recognized.

P—We are all in it together. This is a war. We take a few shots and it will be over. We will give them a few shots and it will be over. Don't worry. I wouldn't want to be on the other side right now. Would you?

D—Along that line, one of the things I've tried to do, I have begun to keep notes on a lot of people who are emerging as less than our friends because this will be over some day and we shouldn't forget the way some of them have treated us.

P—I want the most comprehensive notes on all those who tried to do us in. They didn't have to do it. If we had had a very close election and they were playing the other side I would understand this. No—they were doing this quite deliberately and they are asking for it and they are going to get it. We have not used the power in this first four years as you know. We have never used it. We have not used the Bureau and we have not used the Justice Department but things are going to change now. And they are either going to do it right or go.

D—What an exciting prospect.

P—Thanks. It has to be done. We have been (adjective deleted) fools for us to come into this election campaign and not do anything with regard to the Democratic Senators who are running, et cetera. And who the hell are they after? They are after us. It is absolutely ridiculous. It is not going to be that way any more.

H—Really, it is ironic that we have gone to extremes. You and your damn regulations. Everybody worries about not picking up a hotel bill.

D—I think you can be proud of the White House staff. It really has had no problems of that sort. And I love this GAO audit that is going on now. I think they have some suspicion that even a cursory investiga-

tion is going to discover something here. I don't think they can find a thing. I learned today, incidentally, and have not confirmed it, that the GAO auditor who is down here is here at the Speaker of the House's request.

P—That surprises me.

H—Well, (expletive deleted) the Speaker of the House. Maybe we better put a little heat on him.

P—I think so too.

H—Because he has a lot worse problems than he is going to find down here.

D—That's right.

H—That is the kind of thing that, you know, we really ought to do is call the Speaker and say, "I regret to say your calling the GAO down here because of what it is going to cause us to do to you."

P—Why don't you see if Harlow will tell him that.

H—Because he wouldn't do it—he would just be pleasant and call him Mr. Speaker.

D—I suppose the other area we are going to see some publicity on in the coming weeks because I think now that the indictments are down there will be a cresting on that—the white wash—the civil rights cases in advance. But Wright Patman's hearings—his banking and currency committee—whether we will be successful in turning that off or not I don't know. We have a plan where Rothblatt and Bittman who were counsel for the seven who were indicted today are going to go up and visit the five top members and say that if you commence hearings you are going to jeopardize the civil rights of these individuals in the worst way and they will never get a fair trial.

P—Why not ask that they request to be heard by the committee?

D—They could say, "If you do commence with these hearing we intend to come up and say what you are doing to the rights of individuals." Something to that effect.

P—They could even get a motion in court to get the thing dismissed.

H—Going the other way—

P—Getting the criminal charges dismissed on the grounds of civil rights.

D—We have someone approaching the ACLU for these guys—having them exert some pressure because we don't just want Stans up there in front of the cameras with Patman asking all these questions. It is going to be the whole thing over and over again. I understand too, or I have been told, that John Connally is close to Patman and if anyone could talk turkey to Patman, Connally could. Jerry Ford is not really taking an active interest in this matter that is developing so Stans is going to see Jerry Ford and try to brief him and explain to him the problems he has. The other thing we are going to do—we are looking at all the campaign reports of every member of that committee because we are convinced that none of them complied exactly with the law either. If they want to play rough—some day we better say, "Gentlemen, we want to call your attention that you have not complied with A,B,C, and F and we are not going to hold that a secret if you start talking campaign violations here."

P—What about Ford? Do you think so? Connally can't because of the way he is set up. If anybody can do it, Connally could, but if Ford can get the minority members. They have some weak men and women on that committee, unfortunately. Heckler is alright.

D—Heckler was great.

P—Widnall, et cetera. Jerry should talk to Widnall. After all, if we ever win the House, Jerry will be the speaker and he could tell him if he did not get off - - - he will not be Chairman ever.

D—That would be very helpful to get all of these people at least pulling together. If Jerry could get a little action on this.

H—Damn it Jerry should. That is exactly the thing he was talking about, that the reason they are staying is so that they can run investigations.

P—The point is that they ought to raise hell about these hearings. I don't know that the counsel calls the members of the committee often. I think if they have to have this blunderbuss in the public arena then this is all it is.

D—That is the last forum where we have the least problem right now. Kennedy has already said he may call hearings of the Administrative Practices sub-com-