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Baker's misstatement of fact, misdirection of the focus of the investigation and testimony (which also means evidence-collecting) of misleading of public thinking and public opinion had the same effect with the press. After the testimony of Nixon's honchos Ehrlichman and Haldeman and their claim to unlimited presidential right to unlimited crime, not excluding murder, The Washington Post's longest story on Sunday, August 5, by John Hanrahan, was headed, "Haldeman, Dean Differ on Question of What President Knew."

For more than a half page Hanrahan has a competent comparison of the conflicting testimony. He has a comprehensible if conservative representation of the evidentiary significance of Nixon's secret tapes. He also says, understating the importance, that after listening to two tapes, Haldeman's version is largely corroborative of Dean's testimony, the difference lying not in fact but in interpretation made by Haldeman. He added of Haldeman's testimony about the content of these two secret tapes,

"But the testimony was already out [before the committee] and it clearly was a defense of the President and an attack on the testimony of John Dean."

Nowhere does this competent if partial analysis and comparison do other than support the Baker strategy that is a defense of Nixon, not a search for the essential fact and truth. The space devoted has the same, supportive effect, if not that intent. This and ~~This~~ all other stories I have seen in the Post, the New York Times and a number of other papers and all the radio and TV reporting to which I devoted countless have an obvious failing. Having this failing, equally obviously they fail to report the same failing by all the committee members and its counsel.

Nixon may have jeopardized his legal position by letting Haldeman hear the tapes, more so because one of the two times Haldeman was without official connection and had no role any other citizen could not have had, certainly no unique rights. He also had that and other tapes in his possession and not secure. Why? And why run this needless risk?

The timing provides an answer.

"In late April", while Haldeman was still Nixon's Number One man, Nixon gave him

the secret tape of the Nixon-Dean meeting of March 21, when Dean said he laid it all on the line, including the hazards. And in "early July" Nixon gave Haldeman the tape of his September 15 meeting with Dean, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ This, Dean said, included a report on his efforts to "contain the case and assist in keeping it out of the White House", for which he had received Nixon's thanks and praise (their inadequate indictment had just been handed down); and had been told by Nixon to prepare for retaliation by various means, including the misuse of federal machinery, against "enemies", particularly in the media.

Why these dates in "late April" and "early July"? Why not earlier or later? Is this -can it be - only happenstance? The improbability of anything accidental in this is established by the dates.

After McCord's letter to Judge Sirica, after the honchos had tried to get Dean to pin the rap on Mitchell, Nixon phoned Dean and suggested that Dean go to Camp David for a deserved rest. When Dean was entering his quarters the phone was ringing, with the rest switched to a White House order to prepare a full statement of facts. In trying this it became apparent to Dean that the jig was up. He failed to complete such a statement because an innocent ~~was~~ one was impossible.

Dean was at Camp David from March 23 until March 28.

When he heard of a story he expected to be defamatory, he arranged, by phone, for counsel to protest and to represent him. At the same time, through counsel, he decided he had to talk to the prosecutors, to see if he could work out a deal. He was well into the "indications" he was making to the prosecutors on April 15, when Nixon asked him to sign a letter of resignation in which he would be accepting responsibility for what had happened. Dean would not and was fired several days later.

Here, then, with the prosecutors to be handled and other contingencies to be met, was a reason for Haldeman being assigned to audition that particular tape at that particular time. There is a like coincidence in timing with the September 15 tape.

Haldeman was evasive about the date but not the occasion. He first placed it at on or after July 9 and not after July 11. He later indicated he could have been as early as July 7.

Whatever the exact date, there is no doubt about the occasion. It was Haldeman's first minute in Washington after his resignation and move to California. Nor is there any doubt about the significance of that moment. It followed immediately upon Dean's sensational testimony, a feat of ^{physical} endurance and remarkable consistency in recall that had withstood intensive examination and repetition and had not been refuted in any substantial way by Nixon defenders before the committee and elsewhere. The interval was a few days at most. Haldeman's testimony was already scheduled. Nixon's need is apparent.

So, it is not just the opinion of a trusted friend Nixon sought in ^{giving} ~~making~~ the secret tapes to Haldeman. He was preparing ⁿ Haldeman to counterattack for him, ~~z~~ preparing Haldeman to defend himself, and telling Haldeman what total recall could not, exactly what Dean and he had both said, exactly what the President knew and should have known.

The timing addresses motive and innocence, not just knowledge or lack of it. That there was any question with any president, most of all of a President like Richard Nixon, is a pretense at best. There is no reasonable doubt that what Nixon did not know at the outset he saw to it that he knew pronto. ^U otherwise, heads would have rolled in tumbrils full. They did not.

Baker's decoy first of all presumes reasonable doubt that Nixon or any other President could have been in ignorance for any length of time. Were the White House staffed with Ananias only this would have ^r been impossible.

Second of all, Baker's decoy got all the hounds running in the wroⁿg direction, after a non-existent rabbit.