

The 6/20/72 Nixon tape - destroyed 1/17/74

After reading the WxPost coverage yesterday I phoned Barry Sussman. The NYTimes did not come to town so I was not aware of its coverage. I suggested to Barry that I had not seen the traditional story conjecturing on what the tape could have held. There was a ref. to something Cox had said about it being the first time all those who were together could have been and thus their first conference. I told him this falls short and the session could not have been for reporting to Nixon on what was known because those who knew were not there. Example, no Pat Gray. He assumed that by then the WH knew what the FBI had learned when I pointed him that way but he did not know that in fact the WJ did or how. (Gray to Haldeman, 6/19) I suggested that the important thing discuss was what to do about what was by then known and what could become known. I also believe but did not say how to contain the FBI's work. He said he could agree with this formulation and asked my source. I told him that I could tell him and trust him as an individual but that when we talked when he was a Post employee we had a conflict, that I had written this months ago and while I was willing to risk pointing him I was unwilling to give all this work already on paper away. I did tell him that I was surprised that with all the good brains they had on the story they all missed this because it is public domain. He could not guess the proof and he did say it could not have been Gray, apparently because Gray was not at that meeting. This, if he did not know the fact, should have been the tipoff. He began by thanking me for the letter he had gotten just that morning and saying that he found it valuable and that I had raised points he had not considered. He does not remember seeing the Haldeman memo on that session and will try to get it. He will send me a copy if he does get it. He can get it if he tries. I could if I could go to Washington and probably could by mail. Perhaps if Barry doesn't I'll try. Source, Gray confirmation hrgs., which were printed and ignored by the press then as when held. Ignored so far as substantive reporting of the WG investigation by the FBI. HW 1/17/74