

# TIME



**The Kansas City Times**  
 (THE Morning KANSAS CITY STAR)  
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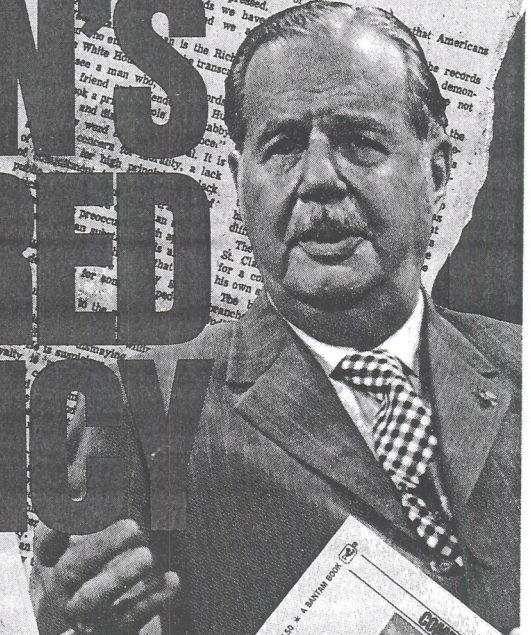
**Chicago Tribune**  
 Thursday, May 9, 1974  
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**THE PLAIN DEALER**  
 OHIO'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER  
 CLEVELAND, FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1974



**Listen, Mr. Nixon...**  
 THE NEWSPAPER is an institution developed by modern civilization to present the news of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and lead public opinion, and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has ever been able to provide.  
 —THE TRIBUNE CREDO

# NIXON'S SHATTERED PRESIDENCY



**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTS  
 OF NIXON TAPES—THE MOST  
 EXTRAORDINARY AND REVEALING  
 WHITE HOUSE DOCUMENT  
 EVER MADE PUBLIC**  
**THE PRESIDENTIAL  
 TRANSCRIPTS**  
 WITH COMMENTARY BY THE STAFF OF  
**The Washington Post**  
 INCLUDING:  
 BOB WOODWARD  
 CAROL BERNSTEIN  
 AND  
 BOB JOHNSON  
 AND  
 BOB MOYER

**Omaha World-Herald**  
**Editorials**  
 Unsigned articles on this page are the opinion of The World-Herald

**A Matter of Morality:  
 Nixon Should Resign**

The World-Herald three-times endorsed Richard Nixon as a candidate for the presidency. We think that his administration has a great deal to its credit. President Nixon brought an honorable end to America's part in a long Asian war.

The President said it was the principle of confidence that he must protect. He must protect it. National confidence was being breached. No doubt some of the things he did involve national security. We were all his actions based on high ground? The thrust of the transcript is that he was trying to cover up. He would cover up. However, we would cover up.

**Editor's report**  
**A facing of facts**

By William Randolph Hearst Jr., Editor-in-Chief, The Hearst Newspapers

NEW YORK — This is a very interesting week. It is a very interesting week because it is a week in which the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, has for the first time in his history, he claims to continue to be honest and to tell the truth in a public message.

That's about the most reluctant statement made here in the last 50 years. It probably will disappoint a lot of people. If so, they will have nothing to do with the shock and surprise and shock I have felt in reading those transcripts of the White House tape recordings of the White House over the past few days.

Now any more or less regular reader of these weekly regular comments knows the President

**THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSCRIPTS**  
 The full text of the Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy's report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, as well as the transcript of the conversation between President Nixon and the President's Chief of Staff, H. R. Holt, Jr., on the day of the assassination.

**The New York Times**

**Los Angeles Times**  
 MONDAY MORNING, MAY 6, 1974

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 HAROLD WEISBERG  
 RT 8 BX 304  
 FREDERICK MD 21701



THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OPENING HEARINGS IN WASHINGTON ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S IMPEACHMENT

BRACK—BLACK STAR

## WATERGATE/COVER STORIES

# Richard Nixon's Collapsing Presidency

*The full impact of the transcripts is just beginning to seep in. The reaction of the public is now making itself felt on the members of Congress, and the public is dismayed, shocked and appalled.*

That assessment by Illinois Congressman John Anderson, chairman of the House Republican conference, accurately summed up the deteriorating situation confronting President Nixon last week. Before releasing transcripts of 46 private conversations with aides, he had somehow deluded himself into thinking that the American people would conclude that the text proved him innocent of wrongdoing in the Watergate scandal. Moreover, he had reckoned that the portrait of a foul-mouthed, conniving, amoral President revealed by the transcripts would soon fade from public memory. Instead, publication of the transcripts produced a floodtide of outrage and indignation as ever-growing numbers of Nixon supporters abandoned him in Congress and the nation. Resignation rumors were spawned faster than the White House could deny them, and a mood of crisis gripped Washington. Nixon's moral authority and ability to govern seemed shattered beyond repair. By all the usual political omens, Nixon had lost the most audacious gamble in his political career and with it, in all likelihood, his chance of serving out his term of office.

The Nixon crisis was most pressing on three fronts:

► In Congress, a consensus was gathering that the situation was intolerable. Some of Nixon's hitherto stoutest Republican supporters were falling. Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania declared that the transcripts revealed a "deplorable, disgust-

ing, shabby and immoral" performance on the part of the President and his former aides. House Republican Leader John Rhodes of Arizona seconded that description. He recommended that Nixon, if his position continued to deteriorate, "ought to consider resigning as a possible option." One liberal Republican, Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania, broke completely with the President and became the third G.O.P. Senator to call for Nixon's resignation, joining Edward Brooke of Massachusetts and James Buckley of New York. (See story page 24.)

► Newspaper editors and publishers in the Republican heartland studied the transcripts with sinking hearts and mounting dismay. One after another, they reversed their previous positions and wrote, in sorrow and in anger, editorials calling for Nixon's resignation or impeachment. In a column published by all of the Hearst newspapers, Editor in Chief William Randolph Hearst Jr. said that the President "seems to have a moral blind spot." The Omaha *World-Herald* saw him "as a man incapable of providing the moral leadership which the United States is entitled to expect from its President." The Chicago *Tribune* deplored his "lack of concern for high principles" and "lack of commitment to the high ideals of public office." (See box page 22.)

► The House Judiciary Committee in a solemn televised ceremony began formally to consider "whether sufficient grounds exist for the House of Representatives to exercise its constitutional power to impeach Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States of America." Given the reaction to the President's transcripts, the committee's hearings on the evidence against Nixon may

well be outrun by events. But if Nixon refuses to yield to the rising clamor for his resignation, the months-long constitutional process seemed more likely than ever before to lead to his removal. Even staunch Nixon supporters found it hard to name 34 U.S. Senators who would surely acquit him of impeachment charges and thus keep him in office.

The pressure for Nixon to resign drove the White House to denial after denial of reports of imminent presidential action. An exasperated Ronald Ziegler, the President's press secretary, finally tried to still the rumor tongues by declaring of Nixon: "His attitude is one of determination that he will not be driven out of office by rumor, speculation, excessive charges or hypocrisy. He is up to the battle, he intends to fight it, and he feels he has a personal and constitutional responsibility to do so." White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig was a little more cautious. In what seemed to be a slight crack in the stone wall against resignation, he said: "I think the only thing that would tempt resignation on the part of the President would be if he thought that served the best interests of the people." That, of course, was exactly the rationale being offered by many in the capital and the rest of the country.

One conservative Senator, Republican Milton R. Young of North Dakota, pointed out that Nixon need not resign to leave voluntarily. Young, who is running for re-election this November, said: "He's getting in deeper trouble all the time. It's a question of whether he can continue as President. It would be a whole lot easier for members of Congress and myself if he used the 25th Amendment and stepped aside until this thing is cleared up." This amendment

permits the President to let the Vice President take over temporarily if the President is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."\* But White House spokesmen denied that Nixon had any idea of doing this.

Nixon himself inadvertently contributed to the national jitters by suddenly calling Vice President Gerald Ford to his Executive Office Building hideaway for an hour-long chat on Friday. The summons perhaps was intended to show that Nixon was still in control of the Administration. A day earlier, Ford had reflected the deepening national anxiety by voicing his sharpest criticism of the Administration since

cussion with Ford was dominated by foreign and domestic policy. Warren acknowledged that impeachment and Ford's impressions of public sentiment "may have come up in a peripheral way." But Warren insisted that the conversation did not include any talk of Nixon's resigning. Afterward Ford told reporters that Nixon suggested "perhaps I was working too hard" in his strenuous speaking tours—which was construed by some as an oblique reproach by Nixon for Ford's critical comments. Ford did indeed emphasize the positive in subsequent speeches.

There seemed small chance that Nixon could stem the massive outpour-

ing of public and congressional dismay as he finally did after the firing of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox last October and the resignations of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and his chief assistant, William Ruckelshaus. Nixon, after days of disastrous erosion in his support, appeased some of his critics that time by promising Cox's successor, Leon Jaworski, virtually complete independence and by eventually surrendering seven of his Watergate tapes to a grand jury. Since then the President's room for maneuver has been greatly narrowed by the various Watergate investigations and his unwillingness to release more tapes.

Even the doughtiest presidential aides conceded that the blows from Republican leaders and conservative newspapers had been staggering for the President. But they clung to the hope that, as one put it, "some of this suffocating moral outrage will diminish" with time. The presidential advisers seemed to miss the point of much of the criticism. They preferred to think that Nixon was being condemned for his foul language, not for the sleazy, devious and possibly criminal conduct exposed by the transcripts.

Throughout the week, the presidential public relations machinery operated in high gear. Haig and Presidential Special Counsel James St. Clair appeared on TV talk shows to defend Nixon's decision not to turn over any more tapes to the House Judiciary Committee or Special Prosecutor Jaworski. St. Clair contended that Nixon "feels that he has been in more than full compliance" with the Judiciary Committee and Jaworski subpoenas by yielding the edited transcripts.

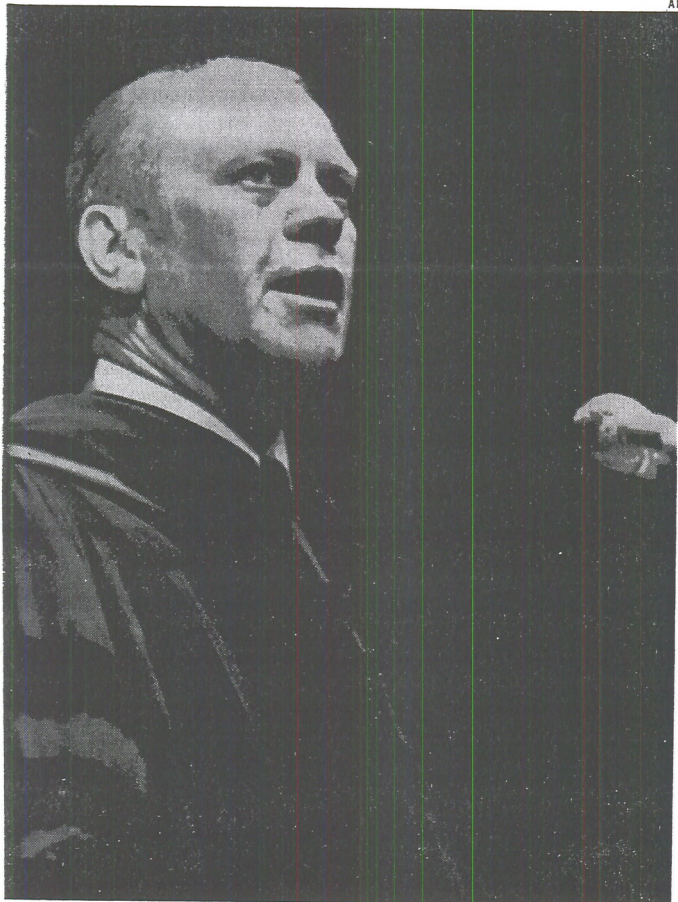
In that atmosphere of presidential intransigence, the House Judiciary Committee opened its historic impeachment hearings with an 18-minute pub-

lic ceremony at 1:08 p.m. on a gray and rainy Thursday. Chairman Peter Rodino declared that "the real security of this nation lies in the integrity of its institutions and the trust and informed confidence of its people. We conduct our deliberations in that spirit." Ranking Republican Edward Hutchinson outlined the view that impeachment will require "finding criminal culpability on the part of the President himself, measured according to criminal law." This view is held by some—but not all—Republicans on the committee. Then the committee went into secret session to begin its deliberations, which were expected to last for six weeks.

**Black Binders.** The sober spirit of the hearings was embodied in two thick black binders placed on each of the 38 committee members' desks. One was an annotated index of the documentary or taped evidence accumulated by the committee staff in the six months that it has probed 41 allegations of wrongdoing—including obstruction of justice and complicity in the Watergate cover-up—by Nixon. The other binder held the material that Majority Counsel John Doar's staff presented to the committee during its first three-hour session. It amounted to a recitation of the events that led up to the break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate complex on June 17, 1972. More binders would follow as Doar's staff outlined its evidence of the Watergate cover-up and other presidential scandals. The initial secret phase was expected to take four days. That meant, since the committee planned to meet only three days a week, that the first public, televised session would not take place before Tuesday, May 21.

During its first session, the committee agreed not to issue a blanket subpoena for the 107 tape recordings and documents that President Nixon has refused to give it. Instead, the committee will vote individual subpoenas throughout the hearings as gaps appear in the evidence already received from the White House, a Watergate grand jury and other sources. One of the first subpoenas is likely to include a request for the tape of a meeting between Nixon, former Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and then-Attorney General John Mitchell on April 4, 1972. According to testimony given to the Senate Watergate committee, that was just four days after officials of Nixon's reelection committee approved the scheme to bug the Democratic headquarters. The committee needs the tape to determine whether Nixon—despite his denials—had advance knowledge of the plan.

An audio system has been installed in the committee room so that members can listen to tapes over earphones. In addition, they will see evidence from other congressional committees and federal agencies, as well as the briefcase of material turned over by a Watergate grand jury that indicted seven of Nix-



FORD AT TEXAS A. & M. UNIVERSITY  
Voicing sharp criticism.

taking office. He deplored the "crisis of confidence" that Watergate has created and—in a pointed reference to the transcripts—said: "And while it may be easy to delete characterization from the printed page, we cannot delete characterization from people's minds with a wave of the hand."

Deputy Presidential Press Secretary Gerald Warren said that Nixon's dis-

\*The amendment also provides an alternative to the impeachment process for removing a President. It states that if the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet inform Congress that the President is unable to perform his duties, the Vice President shall immediately take over. If the President objects and claims that "no inability exists," the Congress must decide the issue by a two-thirds vote. The amendment was originally passed, in 1967, to cover cases of physical and mental disability.

on's former White House and re-election campaign associates on March 1.

Meanwhile, a 170-page draft of the Senate Watergate committee's final report was made available. The deadline for its being approved by the committee and issued is May 28, the date on which the committee is scheduled to disband. The report asserts that John Mitchell, despite his denials before the Ervin committee, did approve the intelligence-gathering scheme that led to the Watergate break-in on June 17, 1972. The draft says that the money clandestinely paid by White House officials to the original seven Watergate defendants was intended to buy their silence, not simply as legitimate support for their families and to cover their legal fees. The report declares that the committee found no national security justification for the break-in of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. The staff is also preparing a chapter on presidential involvement in Watergate.

The committee continued its investigation into Billionaire Howard R. Hughes' \$100,000 contribution to Nixon's re-election campaign. Committee investigators suspect that the cash was given in exchange for a bending of antitrust guidelines to permit Hughes to add the Dunes to his string of Las Vegas hotels and gambling casinos. The investigators further believe that the purpose of the Watergate bugging was to find out if Democrats knew about the deal. Democratic National Chairman Lawrence O'Brien had done some public relations work for the Hughes organization, and it was feared, according to investigators, that O'Brien might know about the Hughes donation.

**Periods of Silence.** The \$100,000 was handed to Charles G. ("Bebe") Rebozo, Nixon's close pal, who last week agreed to give the committee some of his personal financial records. The committee is trying to determine whether the money remained in Rebozo's safe-deposit box for three years, as he claims. Herbert W. Kalmbach, Nixon's former personal attorney, has testified that Rebozo told him some of the money was disbursed to Presidential Secretary Rose Mary Woods and Nixon's brothers. Investigators suspect that Rebozo later used different bills to repay Hughes.

As Nixon's transcripts underwent a second week of close study, more questions were raised about their completeness. Reporters found that some of the transcripts contain unexplained periods of silence. An April 16, 1973, meeting lasted 14 minutes and covers eleven pages of edited transcript. Another meeting that day lasted 28 minutes but fills only nine pages of transcript. Again, the White House logs recorded a March 22, 1973, meeting as beginning at 1:37 p.m. and ending at 3:43 p.m. Yet the transcript ends with John Ehrlichman, then the President's chief domestic counselor, telling Nixon: "It is 3:16." Moreover, of the approximately 1,700 portions of conversations that the tran-

scribers omitted as "inaudible" or "unintelligible," most were from statements by a single speaker—President Nixon.

Deputy Presidential Press Secretary Gerald Warren insisted, however, that "there are not gaps on those tapes." He said that the White House taping system was so unsophisticated that its sound-activated recorders were sometimes turned on by the noise of air conditioners, rattling of coffee cups or rustling of papers. Furthermore, Special Counsel J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., who supervised the transcribing, said that many of the "inaudible" segments were caused by a "swerving" noise the recorders made when they turned on.

More questions about the tapes seemed inevitable unless Nixon changed his mind and permitted them to be examined by outside electronics experts. So far, they have studied eight tapes, a cassette and a dictabelt, including the tape with the 18½-minute gap in Nixon's conversation with Haldeman. They concluded that the gap could not have been caused accidentally. According to other tape experts, a period of "silence" with background noises might not be suspicious on the tape, but a dead silence might be an indication of tampering.

There was a flurry of other activity in Congress as well. The Senate Judiciary Committee decided to begin full-scale hearings this week into why the Justice Department failed to unravel the Watergate cover-up in the summer and fall of 1972. One of its first witnesses will be Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen. Nixon put him in full charge of the Watergate investigation last spring after Richard Kleindienst, then Attorney General, withdrew because the probe's targets included some of his close friends and former associates.

As both foes and former friends rejected the latest Watergate maneuverings, many White House aides appeared grim and gloomy. The President, however, showed no visible strain. At the East Room swearing-in ceremony of William E. Simon as Secretary of the Treasury, Nixon looked relaxed and controlled. Nor was there any sign of obvious strain the following day, when he discussed the economy for two hours with Republican congressional leaders, including some who had severely criticized him earlier in the week.

Watergate was not brought up during that meeting, but it doubtless was uppermost in the President's mind. For a large part of the week, he secluded himself in the Executive Office Building,

pondering his next move. One night, accompanied by a White House doctor and a military aide, he cruised the Potomac for an hour and a half aboard the presidential yacht *Sequoia*. On another night he dined aboard the *Sequoia* with Wife Pat, Daughter Julie and her husband David Eisenhower. As Julie later recalled in a press conference with David, the President "said he would take this constitutionally down to the wire. If there is only one Senator who supports him, that's the way it is going to be." Julie said that the transcripts portrayed "a human being reacting to a difficult situation." But David acknowledged that the documents revealed a new side of

BRACK—BLACK STAR



DAVID & JULIE EISENHOWER DEFENDING NIXON  
"He will take this down to the wire."

his father-in-law. Said David: "It is not the same guy at the family dinner table." Saturday evening, Nixon delivered the commencement address at Oklahoma State University. To the crowd that greeted him at the airport he declared: "I have that old Okie spirit, and we never give up." Then he flew to Camp David to spend Mother's Day with Pat.

Even measured by what has happened over the tumultuous year of Watergate, it was the worst week of Nixon's presidency. And there was no immediate prospect that things would get better. The public outcry seemed likely to continue building, adding to the pressures already on the President. So far, he seemed determined to stay the course. But all the returns were far from in.