

# Revenge Talk Against Post Was Cut From Transcript

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During a meeting on Sept. 15, 1972, President Nixon engaged in an extensive discussion with his top aides about ways to retaliate against The Washington Post and its attorney Edward Bennett Williams, according to sources involved in the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry.

According to the sources, Mr. Nixon indicated his approval of plans to take action against The Washington Post by legal challenges to the licenses of broadcast properties owned by the newspaper.

The discussion of The Post, the sources said, is included in a tape recording of the Sept. 15 meeting, during which various options for dealing with administration "enemies" are discussed by the President, his former White House Chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, and ex-White House counsel John W. Dean III.

Some members of the House Judiciary Committee who listened to the tape yesterday variously described its contents as "revolting," "sickening" and "devastating," and said it does grave damage to the President's fight against impeachment.

Most of the section of the tape dealing with the use of government agencies against administration critics is not included in the White House — prepared transcript of the same Sept. 15 meeting, the sources said.

The White House transcript contains

the notation "further conversation following unrelated to Watergate," at the point where Mr. Nixon and his aides move into their extensive discussion of how to use the federal bureaucracy against persons and institutions in White House disfavor.

Particular attention is given to The Washington Post in this regard, the sources said, with the President and his aides suggesting that the newspaper be "paid back," in effect, for its coverage of the Watergate affair.

Specifically, the discussion involves the desirability of using against the newspaper the Federal Communications Commission's power to license broadcast stations.

At the time, two television stations owned by the Post-Newsweek Stations, Inc. were about to seek renewal of their licenses from the FCC—a fact noted in the discussion between the President and his aides, according to a transcript of the meeting.

"The main thing is the Post is going to have damnable, damnable problems out of this one," President Nixon notes at one point in the conversation. "They have a television station . . . and they're going to have to get it renewed."

"They've got a radio station, too," adds Haldeman, to which Mr. Nixon replies: "Does that come up too?"

A moment later in the conversation the President adds: "And its going to be

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goddamn active here... Well, the game has to be played awfully rough."

The President made these statements after he was informed by Dean that The Post has "got a large team

that they've assigned to do nothing but" investigate the Watergate case.

The House Judiciary Committee obtained a tape recording of the Sept. 15 meeting from the office of Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Ja-

worski. The tape was one of 19 supplied by the White House to the special prosecutor.

A comparison of the House Committee's transcript of the Sept. 15 conversation with the one prepared by the White House shows that the beginning of the meeting was eliminated in the White House version, which states: "This opens just as Dean comes in the door."

The fuller transcript prepared by the House Committee, however, includes three pages of conversation between Haldeman and the President before Dean enters the room.

It opens with Haldeman observing of Dean: "He is one

of the quiet guys that gets a lot done. That was a good move, too, bringing Dean in. But its—"

The President: "Yeah."

Haldeman: "It—. He'll never, he'll never gain any ground for us. He's just not that kind of guy. But, he's the kind that enables other people to gain ground while he's making sure that you don't fall through the holes."

The President: "Oh. You mean—"

Haldeman: "Between times, he's doing, he's moving ruthlessly on the investigation of McGovern people, Kennedy stuff, and all that too. I just don't know how much progress he's making, 'cause I—"

## The Post Cut From Transcript

The tapes are particularly significant to the Judiciary Committee because it was the first chance members have had to judge the accuracy of the White House-edited transcripts by listening to the tapes through the Committee's audio equipment that is superior to the White House's.

The equipment, according to the Committee staff, is able to eliminate background noises on the tapes that the White House equipment picked up.

At a briefing after the afternoon's closed presentation of evidence by Special Counsel John Doar's staff, Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) said the Committee spent about 40 minutes listening to two tapes.

The first was of the Sept. 15, 1972, Nixon-Dean conversation and the second was a June 30, 1972, conversation among Mr. Nixon, Haldeman and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell the day before Mitchell resigned as head of the Committee to Re-elect the President.

At the briefing, Rodino said there were differences between the tapes and the edited transcripts, "but he said whether the differences are substantial "each member must judge." Rodino said he had reached no conclusion on whether omissions in the edited transcripts were deliberate.

Committee member Rep. Je-

rome Waldie (D-Calif.) made it clear he thought the omissions were deliberate.

He described the audio quality of the Sept. 15 tape as "excellent," and added, "The shabbiness of the President has been exaggerated and enhanced by the portions that were deleted... The transcripts are considerably incomplete."

Rep Edward Mezvinsky (D-Iowa), another Committee member, said the difference "makes clear that the edited transcripts are not the best evidence."

Rep. Robert Drinan (D-Mass.) said there was nothing of substance new in the Sept. 15 tape but said "when you ac-

tually hear it in the President's voice it makes a bigger impact." He said he was particularly struck by references to plans to block Watergate hearings then being tentatively planned by Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.).

A Republican supporter of the President, Rep. Charles Wiggins of California, said that the Sept 15 conversation would not support a charge of presidential cover-up.

"If anyone tried to make a cover-up case on the basis of the Sept. 15 tape, he'd have a pretty hard time. It would be impossible," Wiggins said.

The June 30 tape, Wiggins said, "was not an important tape."