

Ehrlichman Notes Indicate Plan to Limit Hunt Impact

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WASHINGTON, July 27 — John D. Ehrlichman's cryptic notes about an April meeting with Charles W. Colson, another former White House aide, indicate that they discussed a way for President Nixon to head off the impact of any possible disclosures by E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted Watergate conspirator.

Whether President Nixon ever knew of the proposal has not been disclosed. However, four days after that Ehrlichman-Colson discussion, he followed the outline of the plan closely in an opening statement at a news conference.

The plan called for the White House to disclose that an investigator had reported damaging evidence to the President, which he had turned over to the Attorney General. It also suggested that the President restate his position on executive privilege, noting that he had never intended it to cover criminal conduct.

Testifying for the fourth day before the Senate Watergate committee, Mr. Ehrlichman told today of having been assigned by the President at the end of March to replace John W. Dean 3d in attempting to get to the bottom of the Watergate affair.

Mr. Ehrlichman, the President's former domestic affairs adviser who resigned April 30, said that he had conducted 10 interviews in the first half of that month. He produced notes on five of them, taken in what he termed "a kind of personal shorthand."

Mr. Ehrlichman explained to the committee members portions of his notes on the interviews. However, the members did not question him today about the plan, which was advanced by Mr. Colson and his attorney, David I. Shapiro, or about several other entries that appeared to be at least as tantalizing as the matters that were explored.

Returns Monday

But Mr. Ehrlichman will return Monday to the witness stand in the caucus room on the third floor of the Old Senate Office Building.

At a recess this afternoon, Mr. Ehrlichman confirmed in an interview that a segment of his notes on the Colson interview referred to a proposal to render anticlimactic any revelations that might be made by Hunt, who was then in the midst of sessions with the Federal grand jury.

The White House was apparently concerned about what might be said by Hunt, who

once was a member of its special investigations known as the "plumbers."

Mr. Dean, who was dismissed at the end of April as counsel to the President and then became the star witness against Administration figures at the Senate hearings, has testified that Hunt was attempting to blackmail the White House.

Mr. Dean also said that he told the President in March that Hunt might demand as much as \$1,000,000 and that Mr. Nixon had replied that that would be no problem.

Other White House aides have disputed in their testimony that version of the conversation about blackmail. And Mr. Dean has said that the President told him at an April meeting that he had been fooling in what he allegedly said about the \$1,000,000.

In the broad but neat strokes of Mr. Ehrlichman's "personal shorthand," the President appears as Pi, a letter of the Greek alphabet. Mr. Colson is "C" and Mr. Shapiro is "S." "Evidence is a small 'e' in a circle. Mr. Ehrlichman himself is "E" and Fred Fielding, a former assistant to Mr. Dean is "FF." Hunt is "HH."

Thus, his notes on Mr. Shapiro's recommendation appear in part as follows:

A. 1—Restate exec priv re crim. conduct.

And on Mr. Colson's recommendation:

C: 1—An investigator reports to pi E & FF damaging e (circled)

2—Pi orders it be given US Atty

3—Then HH anti-climax on Mon

On April 17 at a news conference, four days after the plan was discussed by Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Colson and Mr. Shapiro, President Nixon announced that an agreement had been reached with the Senate Watergate committee on "ground rules" concerning "executive privilege" that would "preserve the separation of powers without suppressing the facts."

He said this "arrangement is one that covers this hearing only in which wrongdoing has been charged."

Then the President added that "There have been major developments in the case, concerning which it would be improper to be more specific now, except to say that real progress has been made in finding the truth."

Met With Kleindienst

He also reported that he had

met two days previously with Richard G. Kleindienst, who was then Attorney General, to "review the facts which had come to me in my investigation."

In another memorandum about a conversation on April 5 with Paul O'Brien, an attorney for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, Mr. Ehrlichman indicated that John N. Mitchell, the former Attorney General and campaign director, had told Mr. O'Brien that they "must close ranks."

'Martha' Underscored

"JNM will tough it out," the notes read. Under that is a line that says simply "Martha," the name of Mr. Mitchell's wife. It is underscored.

Still recording Mr. O'Brien's report on what Mr. Mitchell told him, Mr. Ehrlichman wrote next:

"H must bring Jeb up short—shut up, stop seeing people."

"H" is H. R. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff who also resigned April 30. "Jeb" is Jeb Stuart Magruder, who was Mr. Mitchell's deputy at the re-election committee.

Mr. Magruder has testified before the committee that Mr. Mitchell had approved the political espionage and sabotage plan that led to the break-in on June 17, 1972 at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters.

But perhaps the most cryptic is an entry about Mr. Mitchell at the end of the notes on the Colson interview.

"JNM" the entry is labeled. And beside that appear the words "unbalanced, stress, didn't want to go to 1701 [headquarters of the re-election committee at 1701 Pennsylvania Avenue], drink, disorg, never und control, wife."

No, Mr. Ehrlichman declared in the interview today, he would not explain that—not unless the Senate committee asked him about it.

*13 April? Naughton, NYTimes 28 Jul 73, seems to be referring to same memo and gives date as 15 April.

reproduction of memo, WXP 28 Jul 73, p. 13