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Ehrlichman's Closing Statement

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Following is the text of John D. Ehrlichman's statement to the Senate Watergate committee at the conclusion of his fifth and last day of testimony yesterday.

Mr. vice chairman and members of the committee, I prepared for this hearing with just two objectives: First to state the truth as nearly as recollection and research could enable me to do and thereby to establish the falsity of the charges made against me by your star witness. For nearly five days I have submitted to your cross-examination to permit a test of the truth of my testimony. In my opening statement I listed a number of questions which I asked you to inquire about because I believe they are central to this matter and because I have some information about them.

In the past five days a great deal of time has been spent, mostly on a few of them. As a result, there is now remaining one matter which I believe is important enough to mention in passing to the committee. I did not have an opportunity to review with the committee my notes of my second interview with Gordon Strachan. I think it is important to the committee to know that as you read those notes the question which I continually put to Mr. Strachan all the way through was, "Is there anything else? Are you giving me the whole list? Are these all the people in the White House who

are involved, and have you told me everything you know about their involvement?"

In other words, the list you see in the Strachan notes is intended, as I recall the interview with Mr. Strachan, to be an exclusive list, and that does not appear on the face of the notes, and I think it's important for you to have that.

My secondary objective here was to be prepared to raise a voice for the President, who is unrepresented here. As your questions developed, I had no opportunity to do so as his advocate, I only shed some light on facts which disproved a few of the false allegations which have been advanced against him here. I do not apologize for my loyalty to the President any more than I apologize for my love of this country. I only hope that my testimony here has somehow served them both.

I could not close without commenting on Gordon Strachan's answer of the other day to the question, "Do you have any advice for the young Americans who are expressing their disenchantment with government and the political process." Gordon said, "Stay away." And your gallery laughed. But I don't think many other Americans laughed at that answer, I certainly didn't, nor do I agree with Gordon's advice.

Our political system and our real governmental institutions are not just the

buildings and the laws and the traditions that one sees here in the city of Washington. Our government and our politics are only as idealistic and honest as the people in those buildings who administer the laws and run the campaigns and fulfill the traditions. If some young Americans know that their ideals or ideas or motives are sounder or purer than those of the people now in politics or government, then I think Gordon should have said to them, "Come and do better. Don't stay away."

Somehow, in politics and government it seems that there is always someone to fill the job. If you don't take it, you can be sure that somebody else will. We are either going to have highly motivated, able people running the political campaigns and filling the offices in government or we will surely have seat-warmers and hacks who will fill these places and the country will be the worse for it. People must be attracted who will come here to fight for what they believe in and to work long hours to get things done. I hope that young people don't stay away, I hope they come here and apply their idealism and their enthusiasm and their high moral principles. I hope they come and test their ideas and their convictions in this marketplace. I hope they do come and better.

With young Americans, if you come here, come with

your eyes wide open. If you go to work for the President and the executive branch there are very few in the Congress or the media that are going to throw rosebuds at you. If you favor change in what our government is and what it does in our society you will have to fight for it. No such thing has been won here by default, at least not recently; and be prepared to defend your sense of values when you come here, too.

You will encounter a local culture which scoffs at patriotism and family life and morality just as it adulates the opposite, and you will find some people who have fallen for that line. But you will also find in politics and government many great people who know that a pearl of great price is not had for the asking and who feel that this country and its heritage are worth the work, the abuse, the struggle, and the sacrifices. Don't stay away. Come and join them and do it better.

Mr. vice chairman, this select committee has an awesome responsibility to find the truth. Such a search cannot be made by one whose eyes are clouded by preconception or partisanship, it can only be found by those with open mind, free of bias and unfairness. I am confident that the truth is there to be seen. I only needs the seers.

Thank you, Mr. vice chairman.