

Nothing to Hide...

"I met with Mr. Dean on Sept. 15, and he gave me no reason at that meeting to believe any others were involved. Not only was I unaware of any cover-up, but at that time, and until March 21, I was unaware that there was anything to cover up."

President Nixon, Aug. 15, 1973

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From the White House transcripts:

Mr. Nixon: This is a can of worms, as you know a lot of this stuff that went on. But the way you have handled all this seems to me has been very skillful putting your fingers in the leaks that have sprung here and sprung there. The Grand Jury is dismissed now?

Mr. Dean: That is correct. . . .

Mr. Nixon: The worst may happen but it may not. So you just button it up as well as you can and hope for the best, and remember basically the damn business is unfortunately trying to cut our losses.

Meeting of Sept. 15, 1972

Mr. Dean: We have come a long road on this thing now. I had thought it was an impossible task to hold together until after the election until things started falling out, but we have made it this far and I am convinced we are going to make it the whole road. . . .

Mr. Nixon: They don't think I would be involved in such stuff. They think I have people capable of it. And they are correct, in that Colson would do anything. . . . But let's remember this was not done by the White House. This was done by the Committee to Re-Elect, and Mitchell was the chairman. Correct?

Meeting of Feb. 28, 1973

Mr. Dean: Now the other thing that we talked about in the past, and I still have the same problem, is to have a 'here it all is' approach. If we do that—

Mr. Nixon: And let it all hang out . . . let's face it, I think they are really after Haldeman . . . Haldeman's problem is Chapin, isn't it?

Mr. Dean: Chapin didn't know anything about the Watergate.

Mr. Nixon: Don't you think so?

Mr. Dean: Absolutely not.

Mr. Nixon: Strachan?

Mr. Dean: Yes.

Mr. Nixon: He knew?

Mr. Dean: Yes.

Mr. Nixon: About the Watergate?

Mr. Dean: Yes. . . .

Mr. Nixon: I will be damned! Well, that is the problem in Bob's case. . . . The other weak link for Bob is Magruder. He hired him etcetera.

Mr. Dean: That applies to Mitchell too. . . .

Mr. Nixon: Is it too late to go the hang-out road?

Mr. Dean: Yes, I think it is. . . . There can be a lot of problems if everything starts falling. So there are dangers, Mr. President. I would be less than candid if I didn't tell you there are."

Meeting of March 13, 1973

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"I consider it my constitutional responsibility to defend the principle of separation of powers. Members of the White House staff will not appear before a committee of Congress in any formal session."

President Nixon, March 15, 1973