

Nixon Lawyer's Surprise

-- A New Tape Transcript

House Probers Angered

Washington

President Nixon's defense lawyer told the House Judiciary Committee yesterday that a 1973 tape recording the President has refused to give to the impeachment inquiry would prove that Mr. Nixon ruled out a "black-mail" payment to E. Howard Hunt Jr., a convicted Watergate burglar.

James D. St. Clair, in a bold move that was denounced by Democrats and some Republicans on the committee, cited a brief passage from the withheld recording in a final argument against impeachment.

He said that Mr. Nixon had told H. R. Haldeman, then the White House chief of staff, at a meeting on March 22, 1973:

"I don't mean to be black-mailed by Hunt — that goes too far."

Mr. Nixon's attorney told reporters after his last appearance at the closed hearings, but reportedly did not note in his summation to the committee, that elsewhere in the transcript of the meeting the President had "indicated it would be right to pay money to Hunt for humanitarian purposes."

The belated introduction of the evidence — a two-page edited White House excerpt from the transcript of the 90-minute meeting — thus appeared to have left unsettled the impeachment issue of the President's attitude on Hunt's alleged demands for hush money.

But the use of the excerpt,

after ten weeks of examination by the committee of the impeachment evidence, produced a storm of criticism. Some panel members described it as "outrageous," "incredible," and "practically an insult."

The committee chairman, Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem.-N.J.) said later that he had given St. Clair a pointed reminder that the President, in defying subpoenas of the March

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22 recordings and 147 others, had said, "the committee has the full story of Watergate."

A key Republican as yet uncommitted on impeachment, Representative M. Caldwell Butler of Virginia, said that the incident "illustrates what we've been saying all along — that we really need those tapes."

"I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it," said Representative Barbara Jordan (Dem.-Tex.), expressing the outrage of some committee members that the transcript had been withheld until the end of the ten-week impeachment inquiry.

"It focuses on the utter contempt the President holds for the House of Representatives," she said.

Representative Jerome R. Waldie (Dem.-Calif.) declared, "It is the most arrogant act of contempt toward Congress and the committee that has occurred in the entire proceedings. The hearings which began with edited transcripts end with the worst edited transcript of all. It shows the coverup continues."

Representative George Danielson (Dem.-Calif.) said he doesn't intend to read the transcript.

"At this stage, he has come up with 2½ pages, double-spaced, of a 1½-hour conversation," Danielson said. "Heaven knows of its validity."

He said he thought the effect of St. Clair's action was "to turn off an awful lot of



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REP. JORDAN
'Couldn't believe it'

members of the committee."

Representative Charles Wiggins (Rep.-Calif.), Mr. Nixon's leading defender on the committee, said, "I'm happy to get any evidence bearing on the case."

Two Republicans, however, voiced disapproval. "I

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think it was a very poor tactic on his part to deny evidence when we subpoenaed it and save it for final arguments," Representative Robert McClory (Rep.-Ill.) said.

"The committee members can be justifiably irritated," Representative Hamilton Fish Jr. (Rep.-N.Y.) said. "This is certainly self-serving."

New York Times