

ST. CLAIR LINKED TO HALDERMAN BID

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Said to Have Sought Plea
for General Pardons on
Day Nixon Resigned
NYTimes

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13—Hours before President Nixon made his resignation speech on Aug. 8, his attorney, James D. St. Clair, asked H. R. Haldeman's attorneys to send over a package containing proposals for general pardons, according to informed sources.

The package had been in the works since the previous day—with the knowledge of John D. Ehrlichman's attorneys — and Mr. Haldeman's attorneys knew their client had talked to White House officials about the proposals on Aug. 7, the sources said.

What Mr. Haldeman's lawyers did not know, according to highly placed White House sources, is that shortly after Mr. Haldeman called the White House on Aug. 7, the President, on the advice of his top aides, rejected the idea of granting any pardons. Mr. Haldeman was not aware of Mr. Nixon's rejection until the President announced his resignation without mentioning pardons for anyone.

Flurry of Activity

The proposals by Mr. Haldeman, the former White House chief of staff, and Mr. Ehrlichman, one-time chief adviser to Mr. Nixon on domestic affairs, were part of a last-minute flurry of activity by the President's former aides aimed at convincing him that some kind of pardon package was wise.

One of the proposals included Vietnam draft evaders. The other was confined to Watergate figures. The proposals also included a section disbanding the special Watergate prosecutor's office.

The Star-News has obtained copies of Mr. Haldeman's proposals, and the documents that accompanied them, including a short legal brief on Presidential pardon powers and a typewritten copy of Mr. Haldeman's notes on the subject.

Well-placed sources said yesterday that Mr. Ehrlichman—and perhaps Mr. Haldeman—had felt ever since he resigned on April 30, 1973, that he had a commitment from Mr. Nixon for a Presidential pardon if one became necessary.

Called Nixon's Daughter

Even though Mr. Ehrlichman's attorneys knew on Aug. 7 that Mr. Haldeman's written

proposals were being sent to the White House, the sources said, Mr. Ehrlichman telephoned Julie Nixon Eisen over that night to discuss the matter with her.

Whether Mr. Nixon's daughter ever informed him before his resignation of Mr. Ehrlichman's call could not be learned, although a high-ranking White House aide said he had heard of the approach at the time.

On the afternoon of Aug. 8, Mr. St. Clair, then Mr. Nixon's top Watergate lawyer, called Mr. Haldeman's attorneys, John Wilson and Frank H. Strickler, and asked them if they had some papers for him, the sources said.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Strickler replied that they did, the sources said, and asked Mr. St. Clair if two hours would be too long before sending them over to the White House. Mr. St. Clair said it would not.

'The Right to Plea'

Exactly why Mr. St. Clair solicited the proposals when they had already been rejected by Mr. Nixon was not clear, although one White House source said the President's attorney felt that "every citizen had the right to make a plea."

Nor could it be learned whether Mr. St. Clair showed the Haldeman proposals to Mr. Nixon before his 9 P.M. resignation speech on Aug. 8 although one source said he did not think so. [Mr. St. Clair, who was reached in Boston, had no immediate comment, according to The Associated Press.]W

The sources said the final appeal to Mr. Nixon was decided upon during the week of Aug. 5, when it became apparent that the President's resignation was near.

While Mr. Haldeman's attorneys went to work on the proposals, the sources said, Mr. Haldeman telephoned his White House successor, Gen' Alexander M' Haig Jr., and asked to speak with Mr. Nixon.

General Haig checked with the President, the sources said, and Mr. Nixon told the general to take the call himself. General Haig did, asking Mr' St' Clair to get on the line first as a precaution.

General Pardon Asked

Mr. Haldeman made his proposal for a general pardon, not just for himself and Mr. Ehrlichman, the sources said, and it was conveyed to Mr' Nixon, who by that time had all but made his final decision to resign. When the President heard sources said, "he rejected the of Mr. Haldeman's proposal, the thesis adamantly"

White House sources categorically denied, however, a report this week that there had been any explicit or implicit "blackmail" threat in Mr. Haldeman's call, and the documents prepared by Mr. Haldeman and his lawyers do not contain anything of a threatening nature.