

# Excerpts From Testimony Before the Senate

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Following are excerpts from a transcript of testimony today by Richard Helms, Ambassador to Iran and former director of Central Intelligence, on the 34th day of hearings on the Watergate case before the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities:

## MORNING SESSION

Richard Helms

MR. DORSEN: Did you have a conversation with General Cushman concerning Howard Hunt in the summer of 1971?

MR. HELMS: Yes. I recall that General Cushman informed me that he had authorized giving to Howard Hunt a tape recorder and a camera, and I asked for what purpose and he said he wanted to conduct a one-time interview and that he had been properly authenticated by the White House and that he was working at their behest.

Q. Now you have indicated that in your conversation with General Cushman that you indicated to General Cushman that John Ehrlichman should be called. Why was it that John Ehrlichman was to be called?

A. Because it was my distinct impression that he was the one who had arranged with General Cushman to have Hunt get these pieces of equipment.

Q. Mr. Helms, I would like to move then to June 23, 1972, and ask you if you recall attending the meeting with Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. Haldeman, and General Walters. A. I do recall attending that meeting.

Q. Where was that meeting held? A. That meeting was held in Mr. Ehrlichman's office on the second floor.

### Meeting Described

Q. Could you please describe to us in substance what happened at that meeting?

A. General Walters and I arrived first and waited for a few minutes. Then Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman came into the room as best I can recall what was said, and Mr. Haldeman did most

of the talking, so—and whatever Mr. Ehrlichman contributed in the course of this was either to nod his head or smile or to agree with what Mr. Haldeman said. I just simply want to introduce it this way because it is a little easier for me to describe.

Mr. Haldeman said that there was a lot of flak about the Watergate burglary, that the opposition was capitalizing on it, that it was going to—it was apparently causing some sort of trouble, and he wanted to know whether the agency had anything to do with it. He then said that the five men who had been found in the Democratic National Committee headquarters had been arrested and that that seemed to be adequate under the circumstances, that the F.B.I. was investigating what this was all about, and that they, unified, were concerned about some F.B.I. investigations in Mexico.

He also at that time made some, what to me was an incoherent reference to an investigation in Mexico, or an F.B.I. investigation, running into the Bay of Pigs. I do not know what the reference was alleged to be, but in any event, I assured him that I had no interest in the Bay of Pigs, that many years later, that everything in connection with that had been dealt with and liquidated as far as I was aware and I did not care what they ran into in connection with that.

### Alleged Mexican Operation

At some juncture in this conversation Mr. Haldeman then said something to the effect that it has been decided that General Walters will go and talk to Acting Director Gray of the F.B.I. and indicate to him that these operations—these investigations of the F.B.I. might run into C.I.A. operations, in Mexico and that it was desirable that this not happen and that the investigation, therefore, should be either tapered off or reduced or something, but there was no language saying stopped, as far as I recall.

At this point, the references to Mexico were quite unclear to me. I had to recognize that if the White House, the President, Mr. Haldeman, somebody in high authority, had information about something in Mexico

which I did not have information about, which is quite possible—the White House constantly has information which others do not have—that it would be a prudent thing for me to find out if there was any possibility that some C.I.A. operation was being—was going to be affected and, therefore, I wanted the necessary time to do this.

I say this in explanation of the fact that there seems—that since I had consistently pointed out that no C.I.A. operations had been violated by an investigation up to then, that we had had nothing to do with the Watergate burglary, the fact of the matter was that if an investigation continued to go on it might run into something we were

doing in Mexico. This possibly always had to exist. Nobody knows everything about everything.

### Walters and Gray

So at this point I think it was repeated a second time that General Walters was to go and see Acting Director Gray with this charge. It was then indicated that Acting Director Gray would probably be expecting the call, that he was looking for some kind of guidance in this matter, and that this should take place as soon as possible. I believe Mr. Ehrlichman at that point made his sole contribution to the conversation, which was that he should get down and see Gray just as fast as he could.

We left this meeting, General Walters and I, and went downstairs to the automobile and I spoke to General Walters along the following lines. I said when you go to see Acting Director Gray, I think you should confine yourself to reminding him that the agency and the F.B.I. have a delimitation agreement, an understanding for many years that if the agency runs into any F.B.I. agents or operations, the F.B.I. shall be immediately notified and if the F.B.I. runs into any agents or operations, it shall be immediately notified.

I was not sure whether Acting Director Gray was familiar with this because he had not been acting director of the F.B.I. for very long. I wanted General Walters to

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understand about this because he had been with the agency, I think, only about six weeks at that time, had been having briefings, and I was not sure whether this had ever come to his attention.

In other words, I was asking him to make a legitimate request of the acting director of the F.B.I. that if they ran into any C.I.A. operations in Mexico or any place else they were to notify us immediately and I thought General Walters should restrict his conversation with Acting Director Gray to that point. Precisely whether he did or not, well, you will have an opportunity to ask him.

#### Meeting Took Place

Q. To your knowledge, did General Walters have a meeting with Patrick Gray?

A. Yes, he had one very shortly after this meeting in the White House because he reported to me later in the day about his meeting with Gray, that he had been to see him, that the general purport of what they had discussed, and then the first time I learned that Acting Director Gray had told General Walters at this meeting about some money having been sent to Mexico. I was unaware of any money having been sent there at the time, and even that explanation did not say what the money was for.

But also floating around in this at the time was the name of a Mexican lawyer that we had been asked to check out by the F.B.I. to find out if this man was in any way connected with the C.I.A. His name was Ogarrio, I believe, and we had been running traces, going through the record to find out and check with our people in Mexico to see if they knew him, and so forth, and it was some day subsequent that we got the information back that he was indeed a lawyer in Mexico but we had never had any connection with him and I so notified the F.B.I.

Q. Now, on Monday, June 26th, did General Walters receive a telephone call from John Dean?

A. General Walters told me that he had been called by a man he did not know in the White House named John Dean, and that Dean asked to see him, and when Walters said, "Well, what do you want to see me about," and so forth, I believe Dean referred to the matters on which we had talked with Haldeman and Ehrlichman on

the previous Friday. In any event, Dean said to General Walters, "if you want to verify my bona fides and who I am and my authority to talk with you please call John Ehrlichman."

#### Verified With Ehrlichman

So by the time Walters talked to me he said he had talked to Dean, had verified by telephone conversation with Ehrlichman that it was all right to talk to Dean and that he was going down to see him.

Q. When General Walters came back from seeing Mr. Dean, did he talk to you about the meeting?

A. He reported the meeting to me and told me that Dean had raised with him this question of the Watergate burglary, that there was a lot, there were a lot of problems in connection with it, problems unidentified. Was there any way in which the agency could help, and so on.

It was quite clear that some kind of feelers were being put out to see, (a), if there was any agency involvement or, (b), whether the agency was prepared to assist in some way which was not at all identified.

It was at this meeting with General Walters when he was reporting this to me that I told him that I wanted him to be absolutely certain that he permitted nothing to happen using the agency's name,

facilities or anything else in connection with this business. I said I did not care whether he wanted to be a scapegoat, I did not care whether he was prepared to quit on the issue, I did not care anything about that I simply wanted him to do absolutely nothing because I told him point blank even though he was a military officer and even though he was a Presidential appointee, that if he did something wrong it would besmirch the name of the agency no matter whether he took the blame or not and that was simply not going to happen and I wanted him to be abundantly clear on this in any conversation he had with Mr. Dean or anybody else and as he reported to me on the subsequent two conversations with Mr. Dean I not only reaffirmed this but I said, "You hang in there, you are doing fine, but don't you yield an inch."

#### 2 Meetings Recalled

Q. Could you briefly summarize, of course, Ambassador, what General Walters

told you with respect to the meeting of the 27th and the meeting of the 28th?

A. It is my recollection that it was at the meeting of the 27th, which was Tuesday, I believe, that the issue first came up of whether or not the C.I.A. out of its covert funds was prepared to provide bail money for the defendants in the Watergate burglary. Not only did this issue come up, but I also believe that the additional point was made would it be possible for the C.I.A. to pay the salaries of these individuals while they served their jail sentences.

General Walters, and I have told you about the conversation I had with General Walters the day before about how he was to guide himself in this matter, pointed out to Mr. Dean that the agency could not possibly do anything like that.

Mr. Thompson: I would like to refer to your testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, Thursday, May 17, 1973.

Mr. Helms, were Mr. Walters and yourself being questioned at the same time on this occasion? Were you in the same room together? A. On that occasion General Walters was sitting on my right and General Cushman was sitting on my left and we were in the room together the whole time.

Q. All right. Let me read, if I might.

"Ambassador Helms: Were you"—first of all, "Mr. Woolsey. Let us go back to the meeting itself for a moment. When Mr. Haldeman said that it had been decided that the general should call on Mr. Gray, did he say or intimate in any way who had decided upon that course of action?"

#### 'I Would Rather Not'

"Ambassador Helms: Well, you can make an intimation of that but I would rather not draw out the intimation, if the chairman will relieve me of that. Here was Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman, the two most senior officials in the White House next to the President himself, giving this instruction. And I really feel like now, as I did then, that it would have been presumptuous to have pressed them any harder as to how they had come up with this, or where they had gotten the idea, or who was behind it.

"Mr. Woolsey: You said Mr. Haldeman mentioned the Bay of Pigs. Did he mention the Watergate case itself in

the course of the conversation?

"Ambassador Helms: No.  
"Mr. Woolsey: He did not?"

"Ambassador Helms: No.  
"Senator Symington: General Walters, you confirm that, do you?"

"General Walters: Yes, sir. He did not mention the Watergate.

"He did in the introduction when he said this case had stirred up a lot of things and the opposition is attempting to exploit it. That was the reference I testified to previously. I believe as he came in he said, the Watergate has stirred up a lot of things. And the opposition is attempting to exploit it"—this is General Walters talking—"and it has been decided that you will go. That was the inevitable lead into the whole reference."

"Senator Jackson: He decided that you will go?"

"General Walters: To Mr. Gray, tell him that if he pursues the Mexican part of the financing of this business it will uncover C.I.A. assets or schemes for moving money.

#### Affidavit Quoted

"Mr. Woolsey: I should perhaps read into the record here a few sentences from General Walters's affidavit: 'As I recall it, Mr. Haldeman said that the Watergate incident was causing trouble and was being exploited by the opposition. It had been decided at the White House that I would go to Acting F.B.I. Director Gray and tell him that now that the five suspects were arrested, further inquiries into the Mexican aspect of the matters might jeopardize the C.I.A.'s activities in this area'.

"Was there any discussion in the meeting at all of Watergate?"

"Ambassador Helms: Not to the best of my recollection. And I frankly was hard put at the time to understand what Mexico was involved

with. This was only a week after the break-in. I did not know why Mexico was being mentioned, and it never occurred to me that it had anything to do with the Watergate burglary.

"Senator Symington: General Walters, do you agree with that?"

"General Walters: To me the whole question was connected by virtue of the beginning of the thing when he said the Watergate could be opened as a preliminary, as a lead-in, as to why he wanted me to go. It was obviously a lead-in to this, but he did not go into any discussion of

## Figures in Senate Inquiry

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—Following are the names of individuals who figured today in hearings by the Senate select committee on the Watergate case:

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sam J. Ervin Jr., North Carolina Democrat, chairman.  
Herman E. Talmadge, Democrat of Georgia.  
Daniel K. Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii.  
Joseph M. Montoya, Democrat of New Mexico.  
Howard H. Baker Jr., Republican of Tennessee.  
Edward J. Gurney, Republican of Florida.  
Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Republican of Connecticut.

### COMMITTEE COUNSEL

Samuel Dash, chief counsel and staff director.  
Fred D. Thompson, chief minority counsel.  
Rufus L. Edmisten, deputy counsel.  
Terry F. Lenzner, assistant chief counsel.  
James Hamilton, assistant chief counsel.  
David M. Dorsen, assistant chief counsel.  
H. William Shure, assistant minority counsel.

### WITNESSES

Richard Helms, Ambassador to Iran, who was C.I.A. director.  
Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., Marine Corps commandant and ex-C.I.A. aide.

### PERSONS NAMED IN TESTIMONY

William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence.  
Charles W. Colson, former counsel to the President.  
John W. Dean 3d, former counsel to the President.  
John D. Ehrlichman, former White House domestic adviser.  
L. Patrick Gray 3d, former director of the F.B.I.  
H. R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff.  
E. Howard Hunt Jr., ex-White House aide, pleaded guilty in the Watergate break-in.  
G. Gordon Liddy, former White House aide convicted in Watergate break-in.  
Lieut. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, deputy director of the Central Intelligence agency.

the Watergate other than what I said in the beginning."

Then you go to other matters, Mr. Helms.

Let me see if I summarized this correctly. The question was put directly to you first, as to whether or not there was any Watergate discussion and you said there was not.

### Lapse of Memory

A. That was the way I recalled it, Mr. Thompson, at the time. Since then I have seen General Walter's memorandum for the record. I have talked with him about this and we went over again what had occurred and I frankly at that point had forgotten this lead-in to the conversation. After all, I had been away for some time.

Q. Well, I am certainly not accusing you or any other witness of anything but I do want to clear it up. Let me make sure I have my chronology right. I am reading from page 21-A of the transcript. The question was posed to you, you said no. He said did you know? you said no.

"General Walters, do you confirm that," and General Walters said, "Yes, sir, he did not mention the Watergate." Then Mr. Woolsey said this is something we should get cleared up and he refers to General Walters's affidavit at that time which he had previously submitted in which he mentioned these things.

A. Mr. Thompson, what I am referring to and what I saw subsequently was a memorandum for the record which I believe is in the custody of the committee which was written several days after this 23 June conversation.

Q. Mr. Helms, are you basing your testimony now on your own memory or on Mr. Walters's memory? I mean, you recounted your faith in his memory which I am sure is probably well placed, but I would think that this would be a rather significant matter.

### Memory or Faith

If Haldeman and Ehrlichman as has been widely reported from the basis of this memorandum which I just referred to, I suppose, came in and said, five people have been arrested and that ought to be enough, and if that is the lead into as how the C.I.A. or F.B.I. should conduct its investigation and the basis of C.I.A. contact with F.B.I., I would think that this was something that you would remember.

So, I am really trying to determine whether your testimony is based upon your own independent recollection or just after having read this memorandum and your faith in General Walter's recollection.

A. Well, it is a combination of the two, Mr. Thompson, because when he jogged my memory and we went back over the meeting together then I did recall these other remarks having been made.

Q. Well, he jogged your memory here in the testi-

mony before the committee also. On page 21-A here, after a member of the committee evidently raised the matter of the affidavit of memorandum, General Walters said this. He did in the introduction when he said referring to the meanings of the Watergate—in the introduction when he said this case has stirred up a lot of things and the opposition is attempting to exploit it.

I believe your testimony here today was attempting to capitalize on it.

"That was the reference I testified to briefly, I believe"—and I assume he is referring to his affidavit or memorandum—"I believe as we came in he said the Watergate has stirred up a lot of things. The opposition is attempting to exploit it. It has been decided that you will go, that was inevitable lead-in."

"Mr. Woolsey: I should perhaps read into the record a few sentences of General Walter's affidavit" and then at that time they read into the record a few sentences of General Walters's affidavit which you just referred to which is the memorandum I referred to.

"As I recall it, Mr. Haldeman said that the Watergate incident was causing a lot of trouble being exploited by the opposition, decided by the White House, I should go on Acting F.B.I. Director Gray, and five suspects were arrested. Further inquiries into the matter might jeopardize some C.I.A. activity."

And another question is put by a member of the committee.

"Was there any discussion

in the meeting at all of Watergate?"

"Ambassador Helms: Not to the best of my recollection."

A. Well, I didn't recall at that time but when I went over this with General Walters and we tried to piece this meeting together, then I did recall that these matters had been alluded to.

Q. In comparing your testimony today with what his memorandum says, a couple of things do strike me. His memorandum dated June 28 says that—"June 23, at 1300 on request I called Director Helms on John Ehrlichman and Robert Haldeman in Ehrlichman's office at the White House.

"Haldeman said that the 'bugging' affair at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Water-

gate apartments had made a lot of noise and the Democrats were trying to maximize it."

Then down here he said, "Since five suspects had been arrested that this should be sufficient."

#### A Few Other Things

Let me ask you a few other things about this memorandum while we are at it, Mr. Helms. He states in here also that Haldeman said the whole affair was getting embarrassing and it was the President's wish that Walters call on Gray and suggest to him that since five suspects had been arrested this should be sufficient. It was not advantageous to have the inquiry pushed, especially in Mexico.

Do you recall the President's name being mentioned?

A. No, I still don't agree with General Walters about that. I don't recall it having been put that way.

Q. Director Helms said, again reading from the Walters memorandum, he talked to Gray on the previous day, they made plain to him that the agency was not behind the matter and was not connected with it. None of the suspects was working for it nor had worked for the agency in the last two years. He had told Gray that none of the investigators was touching any covert projects of the agency, current or on-going.

Did you tell Mr. Gray that it was touching none of the covert projects of the agency or did you have any basis for saying that at that time?

A. I was unaware of any covert projects of the agency that had been touched on up to that time.

SENATOR MONTOYA: Mr. Ambassador, did you know James McCord personally? A. Yes, Senator Montoya.

Q. What kind of a man was he? A. He had a good reputation.

Q. And what was his reputation for veracity? A. I have never had any cause to question Mr. McCord's reputation for veracity.

Q. Would you say that his reputation as a human being, as a man, as an employe was very good? A. Yes, it was. He left a good record behind him.

Q. And what can you say about Mr. Hunt? A. Yes, I did know him.

Q. What was his reputation?

#### 'A Good Reputation'

A. Well, Mr. Hunt was—had a, well, he had a good reputation, there was some question at various times during his employment about how well he carried out cer-

tain assignments ~~in the~~ was nothing malign about this. It was just a question of his effectiveness. Mr. Hunt was a bit of a romantic, he used to write books in his spare time, and I think there was a tendency sometimes for him to get a little bit carried away with some of the things he was involved in but he had never done anything illegal or nefarious that anybody was aware of and when he left the agency he left a decent record behind.

Q. What would you say about his reputation for veracity? A. Well, I have said, sir, that he was a romantic, I think that I just do not have any way of being able to answer that. I would have assumed that in matters of importance he would tell the truth.

SENATOR ERVIN: You did know that Mr. Ehrlichman was a very important aide in the White House and also you know that C.I.A. put an end to the — when C.I.A. put an end to giving help to Mr. Hunt, that Mr. Ehrlichman was notified that Mr. Hunt had become a pain in the neck.

So, didn't it strike you when you learned of these things, didn't it strike you as strange that the White House would engage in undercover work on its own initiative rather than resort to the use of the F.B.I.?

A. Well, you know, Senator Ervin, at that time there was no intimation that this was even undercover work. What I understood Mr. Hunt had told General Cushman was that he wanted to conduct an interview and there was no intimation that this was undercover work.

Q. Well, now, here is a wig. That was—you didn't think that the wig was to improve the appearance of the—the pulchritude of Mr. Hunt, did you?

A. I assume that in retrospect because I didn't remember about the wig at the time, Mr. Chairman, as I have testified, but I have assumed in retrospect that Mr. Hunt wanted to conduct this interview disguising himself as someone else but that we didn't know that at the time.

#### 'Definitional Problem'

Q. Well, when a man undertakes to disguise himself as someone else, he is engaged in undercover work, isn't he?

A. Well, we run into a definitional problem, sir.

Q. Well, you didn't think that he applied for this voice

alteration device in order to sing a different part in the choir, did you?

A. Mr. Chairman, my problem here is that at the time that this was going on, I do not recall having been told that he had been given a wig and a voice alteration device. I found that out in May of this year.

Q. Now, there has been some examination indicating that perhaps you and General Walters had some discrepancy, there was some discrepancy of a slight nature in the testimony you gave before, I believe, Senator Symington's committee.

A. That is right, and this misunderstanding was all hanging out there in the committee. I mean, this is just the problem of human recollections, and I realized through these hearings I was told by some gentleman this morning that people seem to have a good forgettery when they

sit in this chair. I do not pretend to be any better or any worse than anyone else and my memory is fallible from time to time, but I am doing my very best at all of these hearings to tell you what I remembered at the time. And as far as the small disagreement between General Walters and I were concerned when we talked it over and analyzed the conversation and reconstructed it, I had to admit I had forgotten.

#### Scripture Quoted

Q. This is not, this question is not asked in any, intimating any criticism at all because I just illustrated myself with this morning that my memory is quite fallible, and although there are some other good men's memories, I will strike myself out of the good men, but the memories of other people are fallible, and the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us that when Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered the crucifixion of Christ that he wrote out a title and had it placed, put on the cross, and people who have an opportunity to read something, where it is just reduced to writing, it is more apt to be accurate than just what we hear, and it is rather significant that these writers of these four gospels disagreed exactly what this title that was put on the cross said.

The 37th verse of the 27th chapter of Matthew says that the writing which was put on the cross read as follows: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

The 26th verse of the 15th chapter of St. Mark has a different version. It says: "The King of the Jews."

The 38th verse of the 2d chapter, St. Luke has still a different version of what was on this title and it says, the title was, "This is the King of the Jews."

And then the 19th verse of the 19th chapter, St. John has a fourth version of the same words or the same title, rather, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

And so I say that if those four good men could have different versions of the same words it is quite understandable why you and I and other human beings have sort of fallible memories about things sometimes.

There is another thing I have noticed about the human mind and that is this, that sometimes when something occurs at first we have the recollection that certain things were said, and our memory does not tell us that certain other things were said, but when we hear the testimony of other people or sometimes look at a document that our memories become refreshed and things that were hidden somewhere in an unconscious part of our mind become fresh to our memories again, and so I just want to say these things because I do not attribute too much importance to the fact that human beings do not recall all conversations and all, even all written words exactly alike.

And I would just like to say this, Mr. Helms, from the observation of the work you did as director of the C.I.A. and from the contacts I had with you, I think you did a magnificent job in that capacity.

A. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.