

Panel Members Say President Directed Payoff

Accounts Of Tapes At Variance

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President Nixon gave a direct command to raise money to pay off the Watergate burglars, a tape of his conversation shows, House Judiciary Committee members said yesterday.

In a talk on March 21, 1973, with his former counsel, John W. Dean III, Mr. Nixon was discussing raising \$120,000 for the Watergate defendants.

"Well, for Christ sakes get it," Mr. Nixon commanded Dean, according to Rep. Jerome Waldie (D-Calif.), who heard the tape in the committee's impeachment inquiry yesterday.

Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) thought the expletive used was, "Goddamn it, get it." He said the conversation was never ambiguous to him, even in the White House transcript.

"I don't think it makes any difference as far as impeachment is concerned," he said, "It adds emphasis, that's all."

The point is crucial to the impeachment inquiry, which is considering, among other charges, whether the President knew about or ordered the collection of hush money for the men who were convicted of the Watergate break-in.

The passage that aroused interest yesterday was in the March 21 conversation in which Dean told the President of the Watergate cover-up and warned of a "cancer" growing around

the presidency.

The point is left ambiguous in a transcript of the conversation which was released by the White House. In that transcript, the men were discussing raising \$120,000 for E. Howard Hunt Jr., the convicted burglar. The passage in the White House transcript reads:

President: "That's why for your immediate things, you have no choice but to come up with the \$120,000, or whatever it is. Right?"

Dean: "That's right."

President: "Would you agree that that's the prime thing that you damn well better get that done?"

Dean: "Obviously he ought to be given some signal, anyway."

President: "(expletive deleted), get it . . ."

The deleted expletive, according to the congressmen was either "for Christ sakes" or "Jesus Christ."

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At another point, Waldie said the conversation he heard yesterday showed that Mr. Nixon knew that \$400,000 had been sent to Alabama to finance the campaign of an opponent of Gov. George C. Wallace in 1970.

In the White House transcript, Dean told Mr. Nixon that the \$400,000 had been sent "south," and added:

"I assume this was \$400,000 that went to Wallace."

In that version, Mr. Nixon then asked, "Wallace?"—indicating that was the first time he had heard of the Wallace money.

Waldie said that on the tape, Dean never mentioned Wallace's name. Instead, he said, the conversation went like this:

Dean: "I assume this was \$400,000 that went to . . ."

President: "Wallace."

There were few other sig-

nificant differences between the White House transcript and the version heard on the tape yesterday, congressmen said.

And several committee members interviewed said they did not consider that the tape showed anything new.

Rep. William L. Hungate (D-Mo.) said the transcript at several points contained what seemed to be wrong punctuations—such as question marks after the President's remarks instead of exclamation points.

"You get a better feeling from the tapes as to whether there ought to be question marks or exclamation points," he said.

In the morning session, the Judiciary Committee listened to a tape recording of a conversation on March 13, 1973, among President Nixon, White House Counsel John W. Dean III, and the chief of staff, H. R. Halde- man. Several members said it contained no new revelations and varied little from

a transcript of that conversation which the White House already has made public.

That conversation has been examined closely for evidence that Mr. Nixon may have been aware of the cover-up before his famous talk alone eight days later with Dean.

Mr. Nixon was informed during the March 13 meeting how some of the money used in the Watergate operation was handled. Dean told him that G. Gordon Liddy, a leader of the Watergate conspiracy, had passed the money on to a Cuban living in Miami who had held it in his bank account for a while.

Dean also told Mr. Nixon

that day that a White House aide, Gordon Strachan, had known about Watergate. It was a direct link between the break-in and the White

House staff, and Mr. Nixon speculated that that could cause a problem for Halde- man, for whom Strachan worked.

In the conversation, Dean told Mr. Nixon that Strachan so far had told investigators that he knew nothing about the Watergate break-in.

"But he knew? He knew about Watergate? Strachan did?" the President asked Dean. "Yes," replied Dean.

"I will be damned," the President said. "Well, that is the problem in Bob's [Haldeman's] case. Not Chapman then, but Strachan. Strachan worked for him, didn't he?"

The same conversation also included a discussion about inducing William Sullivan, then an FBI official, to make public what he knew about surveillance of Republicans by Democrats

in previous presidential campaigns. Dean said Sullivan could talk about Democratic surveillance of Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) in his presidential campaign.

Most committee members agreed the tape played yesterday added essentially nothing new. "It was substantially the same as the White House transcript—except for the filth," said Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.)

Rep. Delbert Latta (R-Ohio) said the tape of March 13 added nothing new. Asked if he felt the tape showed that Mr. Nixon was unaware of the cover-up on March 13, Latta said, "Right."

On the other hand, one of the President's strongest critics, Rep. Jerome Waldie (D-Calif.), said, "It showed that the President was told an awful lot about Watergate" on that date.