

NYTimes JUN 8 1974
**News Tidbits Are Gems
At House Panel Inquiry**

By LINDA CHARLTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 7—At a recent break in the House Judiciary Committee's closed hearings, Representative Wayne Owens, Democrat of Utah, was besieged by clamoring reporters as he emerged from Room 2141 and walked down the hall.

"I thought I had averted my eyes," Mr. Owens joked. "Am I the first one out?"

By now, after four weeks of the three-day-a-week ritual in the corridors of the Rayburn Building, the process has become a joke acknowledged by both reporters and committee members.

Everyone laughs a lot as the waiting reporters surge toward the committee members, trailing along in little clusters as far as the elevators, and then recede to wait for the next victim from whom, in theory more often than in fact, some vital tidbit about what went on behind those closed committee-room doors can be extracted.

Representative Lawrence J. Hogan, Republican of Maryland has repeated so often that he will not make any substantive comment on the committee's proceedings that he no longer bothers to explain his position.

Bulls and-or Sheep

The daily surging through the corridors was likened by one noncommittee member, Thomas M. Rees to the running of the bulls at Pamplona. Others have murmured of the storming of the winter palace or of flocks of sheep.

But it is from these tidbits, and from others obtained less publicly, that the bulk of the reporting on the committee's progress is gleaned. The doors to Room 2141 are closed and guarded by armed police men and are believed likely to remain so except, perhaps, for a very few days when witnesses are being heard in person.

The only official source of information is the daily briefings by the committee chairman, Peter W. Rodino Jr., New Jersey Democrat. This takes place in the later afternoon after the committee has recessed for the day or the week.

Mr. Rodino's remarks are only a skeleton. To put any flesh on the bones, reporters must resort to the running interrogations of the corridors and to leaks from committee members.

The most consistent sources are found among what has been termed the pro-impeachment faction of the committee, in part because there has been, reportedly, little of the sort of exculpatory material that pro-Nixon Republicans would be eager to have made public.

There are some committee members who are generally

available, others who talk only sometimes and to a select few, and others who will not leak information but who will, on occasion, confirm or deny the validity of information obtained from another source on the committee.

Some Confusing Reports

Some committee members have been known to take notes during the closed proceedings. More often, however, they rely on memory, and the results are reports that are often confusing and sometimes contradictory.

One newspaper article about the committee listening to a tape of the March 21, 1973, conversation in the Oval office centered on precisely what President Nixon had said in a remark that appeared in the White House transcript as "(expletive deleted) get it." Mr. Nixon's remark concerned whether or not money should be paid to the Watergate defendants to censure their silence.

The way it sounded to Representative John Conyers Jr., Democrat of Michigan, was "Goddamn it, get it?" Representative Jerome R. Waldie, Democrat of California, heard the expletive as, "Well, for Christ sake, get it!" And to a Republican committee member who did not want his name used, the words were: "Jesus C.HRIST, GET IT!"

As with individual words, so with substance. Senator James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York, noted on the Senate floor yesterday that The New York Times and The Washington Post, writing about the previous day's news, had articles that appeared to contradict each other. "Nixon Tape Is Said to Link Milk Price to Political Gift," was The Times's headline, while The Post article was headlined: "Tape Provides No Nixon Link to Milk Funds."

"The question that now devils me is, which am I to believe?" Mr. Buckley said.

Some members of the committee, comparatively new to the whole Watergate matter, cannot tell what is new material, or what is important. What they pass on to reporters may not be the most significant thing but the thing that for whatever reasons, including individual impeachment leanings, happened to stick in his or her mind.

While none will discuss it publicly, it is known that there is concern among committee staff members about the resulting partial and often confusing news articles and a feeling that, in the literal rush for nuggets of information or misinformation, details assume too much importance, obscuring the over-all picture of what is going on.