

Transcript Mistake Admitted

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The House Judiciary Committee admitted it mistakenly quoted President Nixon in a new transcript as voicing worry about "Earl Nash"—an error that had reporters trying to uncover the unknown figure.

Francis O'Brien, administrative assistant to Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.), committee chairman, tried to minimize the error by noting it was not included in the impeachment panel's comparison of its transcripts with those of the White House.

But the mistake seemed likely to be cited by Mr. Nixon's supporters to offset the impact of the latest tape disclosures.

In any case, what someone on the committee transcribed as "Earl Nash" may actually be a reference to "national security"—which would support Mr. Nixon's claim that he was principally worried about Watergate disclosures affecting national security.

The reference to "Earl Nash" in the committee transcript appeared in a portion of Mr. Nixon's March 22, 1973, conversation with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell. As the committee transcript had it:

Mitchell: "Everything else under control?"

President: "Yeah, we're all doing fine. I think, though, that as long as, uh, everyone and so forth is a, uh—(unintelligible) still (unintelligible)."

Mitchell: All of Washington—the public interest in this thing, you know.

President: Isn't Nash, (unintelligible) Earl Nash worries the shit out of us here in regard, regarding (unintelligible)

Mitchell: Just in time.

When reporters raised questions about Nash, committee staff members who prepared the transcripts were awakened—they had worked all night on the project—and relistened to the tape from which the transcript was prepared.

The staff members then decided the transcript should have read:

President: Isn't, er, Nash, (unintelligible) national worries the shit out of us here in regard, regarding (unintelligible)

Meanwhile, the reference to "Earl Nash" touched off a wide-ranging search for the man by reporters.