

29 Apr 74 C

Nixon - Statement on releasing WH-edited transcripts of tapes to House Judiciary Committee and to the American people, to prove "once and for all" his innocence in Watergate cover-up.

See clippings 30 Apr 74. Cassette N/6. (No printed transcript?) - ANCPA

Colson submits affidavit in U.S. District Court (Judge Gesell) in support of request for discovery of "national security" evidence for use in defense against conspiracy charge. Affidavit says Nixon told him to stop national security leaks and quotes Nixon as saying "I don't give a damn how it is done ... I don't want to be told why it can't be done." Date is not given in story; meeting is one of about ten Colson had with Nixon between 15 Jun 71 and 2 Jul 71. (Break-in, Dr. Fielding's office, 3 Sep 71.)

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Haig, "in an elaborate presentation in the Cabinet room, undisclosed until now [9 May]," tells members of the Cabinet what Nixon would say in his statement half an hour later on releasing the transcripts, says this will finally prove Nixon's innocence in any Watergate cover-up, and plays a two-minute section of one of the tapes, which he does not identify. Says the tape in question had been prepared by WH technicians for maximum audibility; it is described by one of those present as "a series of unintelligible noises." Haig says of it that anyone could understand why WH secretaries "have been climbing the walls around here" trying to transcribe them. Haig asks each Cabinet member to make up his own mind about Nixon's innocence, and if he believed he was innocent to go around the country and make Nixon's case.

Column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak begins, "Suspensions that the Nixon White House is dangerously out of touch with reality in its handling of the impeachment issue reached a new high" with Haig's performance, and ends, "The extraordinary tape playback for Mr. Nixon's Cabinet, designed to mark his emergence to high ground, was only one more ominous shadow of the unreality pervading his presidency. It marked a new high in fantasy."

WXP 9 May 74, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

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Nixon letter to Judge Gesell, on Fielding break-in - See entries 30 Apr, Ehrlichman, Nixon letter; 20 May, Ehrlichman et al.

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A - WXP says no texts of Nixon's speech were provided by WH.
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