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# President Hands Over Transcripts

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## Nixon Debated Paying

MAY 1 1974

## Blackmail, Clemency

'Keep Cap on Bottle'

MAY 1 1974  
Dean Warned of Furor



By Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein

Washington Post Staff Writers

President Nixon, during a lengthy meeting in the Oval Office on March 21, 1973, told White House counsel John W. Dean III that "you have no choice but to come up with the \$120,000" demanded as blackmail payment by one of the Watergate burglars, according to an edited transcript of the meeting.

The transcript reveals that Mr. Nixon, on his own initiative, discussed accommodating blackmail demands on at least a half-dozen occasions during the meeting without once suggesting that paying the men for their silence would be wrong.

Instead, the transcript reveals, Mr. Nixon repeatedly discussed different methods by which as much as \$1 million could be paid to the burglars without the payments being traced to the White House. The purpose of such payments, in the President's own words, would be "to keep the cap on the bottle," to "buy time," to "tough it through."

"How much money do you need?" the President asked Dean early in the March 21 conversation, according to the transcript.

"I would say these people are going to cost a million dollars over the next two years," Dean replied.

See MEETING, A23, Col. 1

By Lawrence Meyer

Washington Post Staff Writer

President Nixon raised the question of executive clemency for the original seven Watergate defendants during a conversation with White House counsel John W. Dean III on Feb. 28, 1973, according to edited transcripts of presidential conversations released yesterday by the White House.

"Do they expect clemency in a reasonable time?" Mr. Nixon asked Dean. "What would you advise on that?"

Dean replied that clemency "is one of those things we will have to watch closely."

Mr. Nixon responded, "You couldn't do it, say, in six months."

"No, you couldn't," Dean replied. "This thing may become so political as a result of these hearings (the Watergate trial) that it is a vendetta."

Mr. Nixon has said publicly that he ruled out clemency for the Watergate defendants and instructed his aides not to discuss the matter. He has never said whether he himself discussed the possibility of granting clemency.

The discussion of clemency by Mr. Nixon and Dean came in one of a series of meetings that the two men held in late 1972 and early 1973 as they attempted to come to grips with the problem of dealing

See DEAN, A23, Col. 1



Dean: "We have a cancer within, close to the presidency, that is growing. It is growing daily. It's compounded, growing geometrically now, because it compounds itself . . ."

Nixon: "... You could get a million dollars. You could get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten . . . But the question is who the hell would handle it? Any ideas on that?"

# Initial Reaction On Hill Divided Along Party Lines

By Haynes Johnson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Nixon Watergate papers, the most extraordinary documents ever to come out of the White House, have been made public to the Congress and the American people.

They are massive in content (more than 200,000 words), riveting in language and characterization of public figures, and explosive in their revelations about the President's role in Watergate.

Release of the 1,254 pages of the secretly recorded conversations of crucial Watergate-related meetings from September, 1972, through April, 1973, came in two distinct installments yesterday.

The first segment, made public in the morning after the President's nationally televised address, was in the form of a White House summary of the conversations—in effect, an official "white paper" on the Watergate affair.

Its tone was that of a lawyer's brief, strongly arguing that the public disclosure will establish, once and for all, the President's innocence.

"In all of the thousands of words spoken," the White House summary said, "even though they often are unclear and ambiguous, not once does it appear that the President of the United States was engaged in a criminal plot to obstruct justice."

Throughout the morning and early afternoon an intensive White House public relations effort was under way across the country to reinforce that view. White House aides were calling editors and reporters in an attempt to demonstrate that the "truth" of Watergate, as now made public, completely absolves the President.

The immediate reaction on Capitol Hill divided along political lines. John Rhodes of Arizona, the House Republican leader, said the transcripts showed the President "in substantial compliance" with a House Judiciary Committee subpoena.

Democratic response tended to follow the lead of House Speaker Carl Albert. "Why substitute other evidence when the direct evidence [the actual tapes] is available?" he said.

Then, shortly after 3 p.m., the second wave struck in the release of the edited documents. They, clearly, were open to other interpretations than those given by the White House brief.

The conversations show the President discussing at length raising blackmail money; discussing the merits of offering clemency or parole; suggesting how to handle possible perjury or obstruction of justice charges; urging the adoption of a "national security" defense for potential White House defendants.

They are candid beyond any papers ever made public by a President. Even though the transcripts were edited to remove expletives, they still contain occasional profanities and harsh judgments on individuals. They also contain disclosures of a kind that are certain to inspire even stronger future controversy about Mr. Nixon's role.

The controversy over Mr. Nixon's compliance with the congressional subpoena also continues. Today the House Judiciary Committee will meet to give its formal response on whether its members find the President in compliance with their legal request for the production of 42 tapes and related materials—or whether they will initiate contempt proceedings in Congress.

Such a finding could become a key charge in the impeachment proceedings now under way.

The transcripts, even in their expurgated form, are certain to be talked about and read long after Mr. Nixon leaves the White House: the Government Printing Office is already planning to sell them at \$12.25 a set, and they will be the subject of countless other books and studies about the way the Nixon administration handled its Watergate crisis.

The conversations are laced with references to "laundering" money and cash payments, to "coded" phone conversations and burglaries and break-ins and even, in one instance, to a Mafia-type operation.

At one point in the celebrated March 21, 1973, meeting between the President and his then-counsel, John W. Dean III, Mr. Nixon responds to the question of raising \$1 million in "hush money" by saying:

"We could get that. On the money, if you need the money you could get that. You could get a million dollars. You could get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten. It is not easy, but it could be done. But the question is, Who would handle it? Any ideas on that?"

Dean had an idea—former Attorney General John N. Mitchell. The President agreed. "I would think so, too," he said.

In that same conversation, Dean had complained that the people at the White House were not "pros" at "this sort of thing. This is the sort of thing Mafia people can do. . . ."

"That's right," the President responded.

The conversation continued:

Dean: It is a tough thing to know how to do.

Mr. Nixon: Maybe it takes a gang to do that.

His release of his private conversations comes exactly a year to the day after he first reported in full to the public on the Watergate affair.

Now he is even more deeply engaged in fighting the most difficult political battle of his life.

*Text of White House summary. Page A18*

*Transcript of March 21 meeting. Page A20*

## MEETING, From A1

"We could get that," the President continued. "On the money, if you need the money you could get that. You could get a million dollars. You could get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten. It is not easy, but it could be done. But the question is who the hell would handle it? Any ideas on that?"

In the ensuing discussion, the President went on to suggest that his personal attorney, Herbert W. Kalmbach, could be relied on to raise the money, that payments to the burglars could be made under the cover of a Cuban defense committee and that the facts could be concealed from a grand jury.

The transcript of the March 21, 1973, meeting is part of 1,254 pages of edited transcripts of 46 Presidential conversations about the Watergate affair released yesterday by the White House. Mr. Nixon repeatedly has said that he first learned of the Watergate cover-up and hush money payments at the March 21, 1973, meeting and that he believed payment of hush money would be wrong.

Throughout the conversation as recorded, however, the President returned repeatedly to the joint theme of avoiding "criminal liability" to members of the White House staff at all costs: the desirability of meeting the blackmail demands immediately, and the necessity of expediting another meeting at which his top aides—Dean, John Mitchell, John Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman—could "get a decision on it."

Within 12 hours of the Oval Office discussion, Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. received \$75,000 cash—a key element in the conspiracy to obstruct justice indictment returned against seven of the President's men on March 1, 1974.

What transpired at the morning March 21, 1973, meeting of Dean, the President and Haldeman is considered crucial by both Mr. Nixon and his critics to answering whether Mr. Nixon himself was a participant in the alleged conspiracy.

The White House released transcript of the March 21 meeting reveals that the President considered the following basic options for dealing with a deteriorating situation described by Dean as a growing cancer on the Presidency:

- Granting executive clemency to Howard Hunt—"You don't do it politically until after the '74 elections, that's for sure," Mr. Nixon told Dean. When Dean suggested that "it may further

involve you in a way you should not be involved in this," the President replied: "No — it is wrong, that's for sure."

- Granting parole to Hunt, an alternative first suggested by the President.

"The only thing we could do with him would be to parole him like the (unintelligible) situation. But you couldn't buy clemency," the President told Dean and Haldeman. Mr. Nixon added: "Parole, in appearance, etc., is something I think in Hunt's case, you could do Hunt, but you couldn't do the others (the other burglars). You understand."

- Convening a new grand jury, which could be controlled by the White House, an alternative first suggested by Dean. During several discussions of the idea, Mr. Nixon noted that such a procedure would offer the protection of the Fifth Amendment for White House witnesses and that "you can say 'I don't remember.' You can say 'I can't recall. I can't give any answer to that that I can recall.'"

- Co-opting Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, by having him appointed as a special Watergate prosecutor or, alternatively, as Mr. Nixon said: "Why couldn't the President call him in as special counsel to the White House for the purpose of conducting an investigation . . . having him the special counsel to represent us before the Grand Jury?"

- Using a national security argument to prevent any testimony before a grand jury regarding the White House-sponsored break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. The object, as described in the meeting with Dean, would be to prevent a grand jury from learning that White House aide Egil (Bud) Krogh had perjured himself earlier when he falsely testified that he had not known the Cuban-Americans who broke into the Watergate (and the psychiatrist's office).

At no point in the 103-minute meeting in the Oval Office did Mr. Nixon suggest that his aides simply testify fully before the then-existing Federal Watergate grand jury, tell the whole truth and accept the consequences.

Instead, he returned to the theme of avoiding "criminal liability" and — far more often than any other alternative — achieving that objective — meeting the Watergate burglars' blackmail demands.

"Now let me tell you," the President told Dean and Haldeman at one such juncture.

"We could get the money. There is no problem in that. We can't provide the clemency. Money could be provided. Mitchell could provide the way to deliver it. That could be done. See what I mean?"

At another point in the discussion the President asked Dean:

"What do you think? You don't need a million right away, but you need a million? Is that right?"

Dean: "That is right."

The President: "You need it in cash don't you? I am just thinking out loud here for a moment. Would you put that through the Cuban Committee (through which payments to the Watergate conspirators had been funneled for months).

Dean: "No."

The President: "It is going to be checks, cash money, etc. How if that ever comes out, are you going to handle it? Is the Cuban Committee an obstruction of justice, if they want to help?"

Dean: "Well they have priests in it."

The President: "Would that give a little bit of cover?"

The edited transcript shows the following interchange near the end of the meeting:

President: "That's why for your immediate thing 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 done?"

Dean: "Obviously he (Hunt) ought to be given some signal anyway."

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

Then the conversation shifted to a discussion about who should talk to Hunt. The President suggested his former special counsel, Charles W. Colson. The transcript makes clear that Colson earlier had discussed clemency for Hunt with Hunt's attorney, William O. Bittman.

In the discussion of how to raise the cover-up payment, the President asked how the money would be delivered.

"You have to wash the money," Dean responded. "You can get a \$100,000 out of a bank, and it all comes in serialized bills."

"I understand," the President said.

Dean continued: "And that means you have to go to (Las) Vegas with it or a bookmaker in New York City. I have all these things after the fact. I will be in great shape for the next time around."

There is next deleted ex-  
pletive of Haldeman's. The  
President then said that  
Kalmbach must have some  
money which could be used,  
but he was told by Dean  
that "Kalmbach doesn't  
have a cent."

A special \$350,000 cash  
White House fund then was  
discussed and Haldeman ob-  
served that, "We are so  
(adjective deleted) square  
that we get caught at every-  
thing." This is an apparent  
reference to the discovery  
by the press of secret cash  
funds controlled by Halde-  
man and others.

The President then  
started to make a suggestion  
and Haldeman said, "Be  
careful . . ."

According to testimony  
later given at the Senate  
Watergate committee, the  
President and Haldeman  
were aware that the Oval  
Office meeting was being  
recorded. Dean, however,  
was not aware of the taping  
system.

The edited transcript of  
the meeting helps explain  
Dean's sworn testimony be-  
fore the Senate Watergate  
committee about the Presi-  
dent's suggestion that the  
Cabinet be briefed about  
Watergate. During his Sen-  
ate testimony Dean expres-  
sed surprise at the Presi-  
dent's proposal.

The transcript of the  
March 21 meeting indicates  
that the President did not  
want Dean to tell the Cab-  
inet the truth.

"Still consider my scheme  
of having you brief the Cab-  
inet," the President said,  
"just in very general terms  
and the (congressional) lead-  
ers in very general terms  
and maybe some very gen-  
eral statement with regard  
to my investigation. Answer  
questions, basically on the  
basis of what they (the wit-  
nesses) told you, not what  
you know."

During the last portion of  
the meeting, the President  
voiced concern about former  
Attorney General John N.  
Mitchell and proposed that  
Mitchell be praised for con-  
taining the Watergate probe.

The President specifically  
proposed telling Mitchell  
the following: "No doubt  
about the right plan before  
the election. You handled it  
just right. You contained it.  
And now after the election  
we have to have another  
plan. Because we can't for  
four years have this thing  
eating away."

While discussing the pro-  
posed meeting with Mitchell  
on the matter of the cover-  
up, the President said that  
"Mitchell has to be there  
because he is seriously in-  
volved and we are trying  
to keep him with us."

Haldeman then noted that  
the Watergate case may  
touch the President. "The  
erosion here now is going to  
you, and that is the thing

that we have to turn off at  
whatever cost. We have to  
turn it off at the lowest  
cost we can, but at whatever  
cost it takes."

"That's what we have to  
do," Dean responded.

The President then said:  
"Well, the erosion is inevi-  
tably going to come here,  
apart from anything and all  
the people saying well the  
Watergate isn't a major  
issue. It isn't. But it will be.  
It's bound to. (Unintelligible)  
has to go out. Delaying is  
the great danger to the  
White House area. We don't,  
I say that the White House  
can't do it. Right?"

"Yes, sir," Dean responded  
and the meeting apparently  
ended at that point.

The unintelligible part of  
the conversation may be cru-  
cial. If, for example, the  
President said that the truth  
"has to go out," then it  
would be highly favorable to  
his defense. On the other  
hand, if he said that the  
money or the \$120,000 "has  
to go out," it would be ex-  
tremely damaging.

At one point in the con-  
versation, the President ask-  
ed Dean, "What would you  
go to jail for?"

"The obstruction of jus-  
tice," Dean answered.

The President seemed puz-  
zled: "The obstruction of  
justice?"

Even after learning that  
the Watergate defendants  
had been paid for their sil-  
ence and that Hunt was  
blackmailing the White  
House, the President said  
that the obstruction of jus-  
tice "could be cut off at the  
pass."

In the discussion of grant-  
ing clemency to Hunt, the  
following interchange took  
place:

Dean: "I am not sure that  
you will ever be able to de-  
liver on the clemency. It may  
be just too hot."

President: "You can't do  
it politically until after the  
'74 elections, that's for sure.  
Your point is that even then  
you couldn't do it."

Dean: "That's right. It may  
further involve you in a way  
you should not be involved  
in this."

President: "No — it is  
wrong that's for sure."

The President has used  
that statement in his de-  
fense, though the edited  
transcript indicates that the  
statement was made in the  
context of the political ram-  
ifications of the 1974 elec-  
tions, rather than the moral  
or legal "wrong."

The President then sug-  
gested that White House  
aide Richard A. Moore and  
Colson not sit in on any such  
meeting. Mr. Nixon gave no  
reason to exclude Moore,  
but said that Colson "talks  
too much" and is "a name-  
dropper."

The President also said  
that he did not worry about  
the unfavorable publicity  
that might follow disclosure  
of the cover-up.

"The point is," the Presi-  
dent said, "that I don't want  
any criminal liabilities.  
That is the thing that I am  
concerned about for mem-  
bers of the White House  
staff, and I would trust for  
members of the (re-election)  
committee."

To avoid those "criminal  
liabilities," the President  
said that it "means keep-  
ing it off" Dean, Kalm-  
bach, Haldeman, Mitchell,  
and former White House  
aides Dwight Chapin and  
Gordon Strachan.

The President then pro-  
posed looking at the course  
of action "to try to cut our  
losses . . . First it is going  
to require approximately a  
million dollars to take care  
of the jackasses who are in  
jail. That can be arranged.  
But you realize that after  
we are gone (presumably  
in 1977, when Mr. Nixon's  
term expires) and assuming  
we can expend this money  
they they are going to crack  
and it would be an unseem-  
ly story . . . People won't  
care, but people are going  
to be talking about it, there  
is no question."

The President also pro-  
posed that the White House  
put out the story that the  
initial payments to the  
Watergate defendants be-  
fore the election came from  
some Cuban defense com-  
mittee.

"Well, yeah," Dean an-  
swered. "We can put it to-  
gether. That isn't of course  
quite the way it happened,  
but—"

"I know," the President  
said, "but that's the way it  
is going to have to happen."

## DEAN, From A1

publicly with the Watergate affair. The edited transcripts of many of these conversations were among the 1254 pages of transcripts released yesterday.

The transcripts lift the curtain on meetings from September, 1972, through April, 1973, at which the two men—the President of the United States and his official White House lawyer—talked informally, with mutual familiarity and apparently using salty language about the problems posed for the White House by the sentencing of the seven Watergate burglary defendants and the rapidly approaching Senate select Watergate committee hearings.

Dean has testified under oath that throughout this period he was attempting to get the President to “get out in front” and take the lead in making public the Watergate affair. Dean has testified that Mr. Nixon was aware of the Watergate cover-up as early as Sept. 15, 1972 when he had his first conversation with Mr. Nixon about Watergate.

Mr. Nixon has claimed that he wanted the full story of Watergate told, that he struggled to have it made public and that he knew nothing of the cover-up until Dean told him about it in detail on March 21, 1973.

The transcripts, edited by the White House before they were released yesterday, present a third version, however, one that simultaneously substantiates and refutes significant portions of both the Dean and Nixon accounting of what the two men said to each other.

A White House summary accompanying the transcripts and preceding it states that Dean had threatened on April 27—three days before President Nixon fired Dean—through his lawyers that unless Dean received

immunity from prosecution, “We will bring the President in—not in this case but in other things.”

The summary quotes Mr. Nixon telling Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, who conveyed the message of Dean's alleged threat, “All right. We have got the immunity problem resolved. Do it, Dean, if you need to, but boy, I am telling you—there ain't going to be any blackmail.”

In addition to showing that Mr. Nixon raised the issue of clemency Feb. 28, 1973, the transcripts also show that the President was told by Dean on March 13, 1973, that Gordon Strachan, an aide to White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, knew about the Watergate affair prior to June 17, 1972, when the Watergate break-in occurred.

“Well, then,” President Nixon commented when Dean told him about Strachan, “he probably told Bob (Haldeman). He may not have.”

Dean assured Mr. Nixon that Strachan “is as tough as nails. He can go in and stonewall, and say, ‘I don't know anything about what you are talking about.’ He has already done it twice you know, in interviews.”

“I guess he should, shouldn't he?” President Nixon replied. “I suppose we can't call that justice, can we?”

Strachan is presently under indictment, along with Haldeman and five other former White House and Nixon campaign officials on charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice and making false statements to a federal grand jury, charges stemming from the Watergate cover-up.

Dean also told Mr. Nixon that deputy Nixon campaign manager Jeb Stuart Magruder also knew about the Watergate break-in. “Oh, I see,” Mr. Nixon said. “The other weak link for Bob (Haldeman) is Magruder.”

Mr. Nixon also was told by Dean on March 13, 1973, that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and special presidential counsel Charles W. Colson also

could be involved in the Watergate affair.

The edited transcripts do not substantiate Dean's testimony before the Senate select Watergate committee, however, that he told Mr. Nixon on Sept. 15, 1972—the day the original Watergate indictments were returned—“that all that I had been able to do was to contain the case and assist in keeping it out of the White House. I also told him that there was a long way to go before this matter would end and that I certainly could make no assurances that the day would not come when this matter would start to unravel.”

In fact, the transcript shows Dean telling Mr. Nixon:

“Three months ago I would have had trouble predicting there would be a day when this would be forgotten, but I think I can say that 54 days from now nothing is going to come crashing down to our surprise.”

“That what?” President Nixon asked.

“Nothing is going to come crashing down to our surprise,” Dean replied.

“Oh, well,” President Nixon responded, “This is a can of worms as you know a lot of this stuff that went on. And the people who worked this way are awfully embarrassed. But the way you have handled all this seems to me has been very skillful, putting your fingers in the leaks that have sprung here and sprung there.”

The summary prepared by the White House to accompany the transcripts explains that this last remark by Mr. Nixon, “was said in the context not of a criminal plot to obstruct justice as Dean alleges, but rather in the context of the politics of the matter, such as civil suits, countersuits, Democratic efforts to exploit Watergate as a political issue and the like . . . This is an example of the possible ambiguities that the President says exists in these tapes that someone with a motive to discredit the President could take out of context and distort to suit his own purposes.”

In other detail, the transcript bears out Dean's version of this meeting, including an extensive discussion on how hearings being proposed by House Banking and Currency Committee Chairman Wright Patman (D-Texas) could be clocked and President Nixon's suggestion that "comprehensive notes on all those who tried to do us in" should be kept. "They were doing this quite deliberately," Mr. Nixon said, "and they are asking for it and they are going to get it."

"We have not used the power in this four years as you know. We have never used it. We have not used the Bureau (FBI) and we have not used the Justice Department, but things are going to change now. And they are either going to do it right or go," Mr. Nixon said.

"What an exciting prospect," Dean replied.

Although President Nixon has said publicly that he wanted the full story of the Watergate affair told publicly after the 1972 election, a conversation with Dean on March 13 indicates that he was at least ambivalent on the point.

"Now the other thing that we have talked about in the past, and I still have the same problem, is to have a 'here it all is' approach," Dean told Mr. Nixon. "If we do that . . ."

"And let it all hang out," Mr. Nixon interrupted.

"And let it all hang out," Dean repeated.

"We have passed that point," Mr. Nixon said.

"Plus the fact, they are not going to believe the truth. That is the incredible thing," Dean said.

"They won't believe the truth," Mr. Nixon said, "and they have committed seven people."

"That's right. They will continually try to say there is (intelligible)," Dean answered.

One of the ironies of the Watergate affair is illustrated by President Nixon's next remark, speaking as he was in confidence to the man who later became his principal accuser.

"They hope," Mr. Nixon told Dean, "one will say one day, 'Haldeman did it,' and one day one will say I did it."

Beyond what the actual language of the conversations shows about the two men, about their motivations and intentions, the full context of their conversations shows that Dean was not so earnest in trying to convince Mr. Nixon that continuing the cover-up was not only impractical but wrong. At the same time, the conversations show that Mr. Nixon, although expressing surprise at some of Dean's revelations, did not appear bent on revealing the truth whatever the cost.

President Nixon has explained in his discussions about the March 21 meeting that he was exploring options with Dean.

Dean mentioned to Mr. Nixon that Colson had discussed commutation of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt's prison sentence indirectly with Hunt. "All of these things are bad, in what they are problems, they are promises, they are commitments," Dean said. "They are the very sort of thing that the Senate is going to be looking most for. I don't think they can find them, frankly."

"Pretty hard," Mr. Nixon responded.

"Pretty hard. Damn hard. Its all cash," Dean said, referring to money that had been paid to the seven original Watergate defendants.

Dean mentioned to Mr. Nixon that \$1 million would be needed over the next two years to pay the Watergate defendants.

"We could get that," Mr. Nixon responded. "On the money, if you need the money you could get that. You could get a million dollars. You could get it in cash. I know where it could be gotten. It is not easy, but it could be done. But the question is who the hell would handle it? Any ideas on that?"

"That's right," Dean responded. "Well, I think that is something that Mitchell ought to be charged with."

"I would think so too," Mr. Nixon said.

Periodically in the March 21 meeting, Dean returned to his opening theme of a "cancer" threatening Mr. Nixon's presidency. At one point, Dean told Mr. Nixon that presidential aide Egil (Bud) Krogh had committed perjury in testimony before the federal grand jury.

"He might be able to —" Mr. Nixon responded. "I am just trying to think. Perjury is an awful hard rap to prove. If he could just say that I—well, go ahead."

At another point, in discussing the money demands of Hunt and the other defendants, Mr. Nixon said, "Let me put it frankly: I wonder if that doesn't have to be continued? Let me put it this way: Let us suppose that you get the million bucks, and you get the proper way to handle it. You could hold that side?"

"Uh huh," Dean replied. "It would seem to me that would be worthwhile," Mr. Nixon said.

A moment later, after Dean has pointed out that clemency would have to be given and "politically, it's impossible for you to do it," Mr. Nixon agreed, "You can't do it politically until after the '74 elections that's for sure. Your point is that even then you couldn't do it . . . No — it is wrong and that's for sure."

Later, Mr. Nixon expresses concern that "we are going to be bled to death. And in the end, it is going to come out anyway. Then you get the worst of both worlds. We are going to lose, and the people are going to—"

"And look like dopes," interjected Haldeman, who had joined the meeting.

Moments later, despite Mr. Nixon's public statements that he rejected paying money to Hunt, he told Dean:

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

"That's right," Dean agreed.

"Would you agree," Mr. Nixon said, "that that's the prime thing that you damn well better get that done?"