

'Hush Money' Tape Held Possibly Harmful to Nixon

WASHINGTON, May 27 (AP) — Three Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee say that President Nixon's "hush money" conversation of March 21, 1973, is the only evidence they have heard that could tend to implicate the President in the Watergate cover-up. The three Republican Representatives, interviewed over the Memorial Day recess, said that the March 21 discussion between Mr. Nixon and John W. Dean 3d, then his counsel, was not definitive as to whether the President directly ordered a hush payment to a Watergate burglar.

However, "in all honesty there is information on that tape that might tend to incriminate the President," Representative Charles E. Wiggins of California added.

Mr. Wiggins and Representative David W. Dennis of Indiana and Henry P. Smith 3d of upstate New York had insisted before listening to the tape last week that the inquiry had yet to hear any evidence im-

plicating Mr. Nixon. But now they say that the March 21 talk, particularly Mr. Nixon's directive to Mr. Dean to "Get it" in reference to a payment, could be a turning point provided it was clarified by further investigation.

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In the course of that conversation, the President asked Mr. Dean if he thought they had no choice but to meet a demand for money made by E. Howard Hunt Jr., a Watergate conspirator.

Following is the exchange in the transcripts made public by the White House:

Mr. Nixon: "Would you agree that that's the prime thing that you damn well better get that done?" Mr. Dean: "Obviously he ought to be given some signal anyway." Mr. Nixon: "(expletive) Get it. In a way that—who is going to talk to him? Colson? He is the one who is supposed to know him." Mr. Dean: "Well, Colson doesn't have any money . . ."

Some committee members say that the full quote by the President was "Jesus Christ, get it." Others thought that he said, "For Christ sakes, get it."

Link to Payment

Representative Jerome R. Waldie, Democrat of California, said that the order proved that the President was guilty of obstruction of justice.

A Watergate grand jury charged in indictments that a series of telephone calls among top Nixon aides began just a half hour after that meeting and led to Mr. Hunt's being paid \$75,000 that night.

But Representatives Wiggins, Dennis and Smith said that Mr. Nixon's comment could be read in less damaging light.

Perhaps, they said, the President's order applied to getting a signal—but not necessarily the money—to Mr. Hunt. And money. Mr. Dennis said, his intent might have been to prevent Mr. Hunt from compromising national security secrets, not to keep him from implicating higher White House officials in the scandal.

Representative Dennis has urged the panel to interrogate nine persons allegedly involved in getting the money to Mr.

Hunt as to whether they understood that Mr. Nixon ordered the payment.

Representative Wiggins added that the tapes of followup conversations might help provide clarification. The commit-

tee is scheduled to resume its sessions Wednesday.

Appraisal by Cox

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va., May 27 (UPI)—Archibald Cox, the former special Watergate prosecutor in the October 1973, Watergate tape that President Nixon took part in a conspiracy to obstruct justice.

"Taking the public transcript and the facts that have been published as surrounding that conversation, it is a permissible inference that the President participated in a conspiracy to obstruct justice," Mr. Cox said at a news conference before he gave a commencement address at the University of Virginia Law School. "Like all inferences, you don't have to draw it," Mr. Cox added.

"Most Serious Offense"

Mr. Cox also said that if the courts ordered the President to submit additional evidence to Leon Jaworski, who is now the special prosecutor, or the House Judiciary Committee, "failure to comply would in my judgment be the most serious of impeachable offenses."

Mr. Cox was dismissed as special prosecutor last Oct. 21 in a battle with the White House over his efforts to obtain nine tapes of Watergate conversations.