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**Nixon Advice to Mitchell in April, '72:
'Start a Fight Right Now—Play Hard'**

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WASHINGTON, July 11—
"Start a fight right now,"
President Nixon told his campaign manager, John N. Mitchell, over a late-afternoon cup of

consommé, "Play hard."
It was Tuesday, April 4, 1972, the day of the Wisconsin Presidential primary among several Democratic rivals. Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine was sinking; Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota was on the rise; Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts was on the sidelines. The President's trip to Russia was over; the trip to China was yet to come. Watergate hadn't happened, but reports of a scandal involving the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation were so persistent an irritation that the National Convention site switched from San Diego, where an I.T.T.-owned hotel had offered a pledge of up to \$400,000 to finance the convention there.

The answer, the President said, was to pick a fight over costs or arrangements with the Canadian owners of the convention arena at San Diego, and make that the excuse for changing sites to Miami Beach. "All Canadians are tough," Mr. Nixon cautioned his campaign manager and former Attorney General. But at the end of a rambling conversation he concluded: "I can't tell you too strongly now with regard to the San Diego thing—got some-

thing to do, do it! Cut your losses and get out." To his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, the President added, "But I do think from a P.R. standpoint, Bob, at this time we really ought to."

James D. St. Clair, the President's counsel in the impeachment proceedings, introduced the transcript of the 37-minute meeting to show that there had been no mention in Mr. Nixon's presence of campaign intelligence or the scheme to burglarize the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate complex.

Boating and Fishing

According to Jeb Stuart Magruder, Mr. Nixon's deputy campaign manager, Mr. Mitchell had approved the Watergate bugging raid in a Florida meeting five days before Mr. Mitchell talked politics with the President in the Oval Office.

Mr. Mitchell denies having approved the burglary, however, and in the edited transcript of his chat with Mr. Nixon, he does not mention it. His Florida trip, the transcript suggests, was primarily a boating and fishing vacation, though he added: "We had some of the people down from the Committee [to Re-elect the President] where we could spend a couple of days, you know with quiet and so . . ."

The April 4 transcript opens another revealing window on the Nixon White House.

The North Vietnamese "have never been bombed like they're

going to be bombed this time," the President remarked. American flyers, he complained, were too cautious about bombing in bad weather. "The Air Force isn't worth a—I mean, they won't fly."

'Smoke Him Out'

He seemed to relish conflict. He viewed Congressional investigations as harassment by Democrats, but delighted that "I.T.T.'s got 'em confused." He instructed his aides to put out the word that no matter which Democrat won the Wisconsin primary, Senator Kennedy would be the real gainer. "Smoke him out a little," the President said.

The possibility of anti-Nixon demonstration at the Republican Convention "doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference anyway," Mr. Nixon said. But it was another reason to hold the convention in Florida, where any unfavorable reaction to the police would reflect on state and local Democrats. "There's very little we could do to screw up Florida as a state that we might win," Mr. Nixon added. "California is a tossup anyway you figure it. It's a—to carry and there's a nasty incident that could hurt us."

Mr. Nixon was keenly interested in the politics of his reelection, foreseeing, for example, the divisive effect of the school busing controversy in customarily Democratic Michigan. "Michigan judgment could be very interesting," he said, "because if it gets really heated up on busing, if it could, and we're on the one side and they're on the other side, you might win the state on that issue. You agree, Bob?"

Yet in reviewing Mr. Mitchell's choices to be state captains of the re-election campaign, he assumed that much of the effort would be out of his control. Concerning New York, he told Mr. Mitchell, "you've got to play the game and Rockefeller's got to carry it for us, hasn't he?" The choice of Arlen Specter, then the District Attorney in Philadelphia, to run Pennsylvania would help, Mr. Nixon said, "with the Jews and with the blacks."

He was worried about the choice of Ray Bliss, the former Republican National Chairman, to run Ohio. "I think going for the old-timer there is a bad idea," he said. But he was pleased in Texas, Mr. Mitchell was taking his cues from the former Democratic Governor, John B. Connally.

When Mr. Mitchell remarked that Texas Republicans were "itchy" about their campaign jobs, Mr. Nixon said, "Let 'em go. Let them go. They don't—that doesn't make any difference. Hold it firm. We need Texas Democrats. We don't win Texas. We haven't won it yet—but you don't win with Republicans. We never have. And let's just face it, that's the way the score is."