

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON'S DAILY DIARY
(See Travel Record for Travel Activity)

DATE (Mo., Day, Yr.)
MAY 15, 1973 *JR*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME		PHONE	
In	Out	P=Placed	R=Received
12:11			

GEMSTONE

source _____ date _____

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1/2/73

TO: John Dean
FROM: Charles Colson

Now what the hell do I do?

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The President

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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TELEPHONE MEMORANDUM

Page 2
Wednesday
H.R. Haldeman *March 21* 1973

TIME	PLACED	DISC	NAME	ACTION
OUT	2:50 AM		Colo. 868-3713	
INC	2:50 PM		Colonel Flynn	✓
OUT	2:58 AM		The President	Hand 255 H. West news
INC	4:06 PM		944-253-3000 Alan Kendall	Do L.H.
OUT			John Mitchell's Office	Call - 9:30 AM Mitt - Amer 520
INC				

Exhibits in the case: Between candor and concealment, a scenario that never jelled

An Encyclopedia of Evidence

In televised testimony, leaked dribbles and massive White House transcripts, the evidence of Richard Nixon's role in the Watergate scandal had been accumulating for more than a year. But last week, it suddenly appeared as one massive pile of eight thick volumes—the centerpiece of the House Judiciary Committee's emerging case for impeachment—and the effect was profound.

In more than 4,000 pages, the committee's staff presented a bone-dry and relentlessly unbiased chronology of the complex affair along with supporting documents that ranged from Presidential tapes to handwritten notes and confidential grand-jury testimony. It was far from an indictment stating the impeachment case; that remained to be debated by the committee starting this week. But the pattern of the raw evidence strongly suggested that Mr. Nixon knew more about Watergate—and knew it earlier—than he has admitted, and that he was often more concerned about defending his White House redoubt than exposing the scandal buried there.

The committee's voluminous "Statement of Information" meticulously avoided drawing any conclusions. But as structured by special counsel John Doar and his staff, the 243 crisp, uncontested statements of fact—each backed by exhaustive supporting evidence—seemed to spotlight several key themes. Most critical to the final decision on impeachment was the President's apparent feeling, even as early as two weeks after the break-in at

Democratic National Committee headquarters, that darker secrets involved were best kept hidden. "We hope nothing will [come out]," he told White House chief of staff H.R. (Bob) Halde- man and campaign director John Mitchell on June 30, 1972—a conversation not included in the tape transcripts previously released by the White House. "It may not," the President added. "But there is always the risk."

Also underscored by the evidence were the early White House connections with the campaign intelligence plan that ultimately led to Watergate. Finally, last week's flood of details and documents produced the sharpest picture yet of Mr. Nixon's desperate search in March and April of last year for a safe "scenario"—some never-quite-realized combination of candor and concealment that would have him appearing to explode the Watergate cover-up while still protecting himself and as many of those near him as possible.

"That's the thing I am really concerned with. We're going to protect our people if we can," the President told Mitchell on March 22, one day after John W. Dean's dramatic "cancer-on-the-Presidency" revelations. It was in that conversation, previously edited out of the transcripts, that Mr. Nixon said he wanted his aides to "stonewall . . . cover-up or anything else" before the Senate Watergate committee.

The new evidence in last week's collection was noteworthy, if not definitive or overwhelming. Besides the Presi-

dential quotes of June 30 and March 22, the committee released the first full record of Mr. Nixon's March 21 Dicta- belt comments on Dean's disclosures ("the day . . . was relatively uneventful . . ."). And from the tape of a June 4, 1973, discussion between the President and press secretary Ronald Ziegler, committee staffers also came up with Mr. Nixon's own statement that Dean had actually begun briefing him on "the substance of Watergate" on March 17, 1973—five days earlier than the President has consistently maintained.

The absence of other new evidence was blamed on Mr. Nixon himself. "To the extent that the President declined to comply with the Committee's subpoenas and produce the required material," wrote chairman Peter Rodino of New Jersey in a foreword, "the record of the Committee now made public in these volumes is incomplete." Still, there was plenty to digest, both for the congressmen who must soon decide on impeachment—and for the folks back home.

THE ROOTS OF WATERGATE

The first book of evidence traced events leading up to the Watergate break-in, beginning with a bureaucratic alert to Haldeman from his political aide, Gordon Strachan, on Dec. 2, 1971, that Dean and Mitchell had discussed "the need to develop a political intelligence capability" at the Committee for the Re-election of the President. Strachan mentioned that a CRP intelligence job for

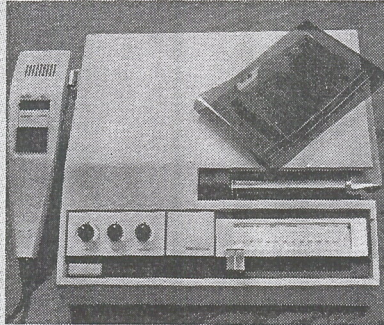
The President's Memoir of March 21

When Richard Nixon returned late to his quarters after the fateful meetings of March 21 with his closest aides, he recalled the day of deepening Watergate crisis on a dictating machine. Excerpts from the Presidential aide-mémoire.

As far as the day was concerned it was relatively uneventful except for the, uh, talk with Dean, Dean, really in effect, let it all hang out when he said there was a cancerous growth around the President that simply was going to continue to grow and that we had probably to cut it out now rather than let it grow and destroy us later. He obviously is very depressed and doesn't really see anything—other course of action open, but to, uh, move to let the, uh, facts out.

As I examined him it, uh, seems that he feels even he would be guilty of some, uh, criminal pra—, uh, liability, due to the fact that he, uh, participated in the actions which, uh, resulted in taking care of the defendants, while they were, uh, under trial. Uh, as he pointed out, uh, what is causing him concern is that every one of the various participants is now getting his own counsel and that this is going to cause considerable problems, because it will be each man for himself, and, uh, one will not be afraid to rat on the other. As a matter of fact, uh, Haldeman backed him up in this respect, when, uh, he mentioned the fact that, uh, even Magruder would, uh, bring Haldeman down if he, would, uh, if he felt that he himself was to go down. Haldeman said he agreed ...

It seemed to me in my talk with Dean that the idea of a Grand Jury had, uh, much to, uh, be said for it. Yet after he, Haldeman and Ehrlichman had met they came back and said they'd been around the track and felt that that would be a mistake. Ehrlichman did not feel, for example, that a Grand Jury or some sort of a special panel which Dean thought could be set up, uh, would be able to grant immunity. Uh, the Grand Jury appealed



Tony Rollo—Newsweek

to me because, uh, it seemed to me this would be much better to have the White House, uh, people appear before a Grand Jury with some rules of evidence than to, uh, be forced, uh, eventually to appear before a Committee of the Congress, where there would be none. Of course, the other option is for them not to appear at all, but this puts the buck right back on the President, as Dean pointed out, and leaves, uh, not only the aura of cover-up but also the, uh, very great danger that somebody like H--Hunt is going to blow ...

I feel for all of the people involved here, because they were all, as I pointed out to them in the meeting in the EOB this afternoon, involved for the very best of motives. Uh, I don't think that, uh, certainly Haldeman or Ehrlichman had any idea about bugging, I, I and of course know Dean didn't. He in fact pointed out that when, uh, Liddy had first presented this scheme it was so wild that Mitchell sat puffing his pipe rather chuck—or rather, uh, chuckling all the while ...

I learned for the first time that, uh, Ehrlichman apparently had sent Hunt and his crew to check into Ellsberg, uh, to see something about his, uh, check something about his, uh, uh, psychiatric problem with his doctor, or something like that ... the whole Ellsberg business, uh, was something was undertaken solely for the purpose of, uh, attempting to get information which would be helpful in, uh, working up some of the Government's case, uh, on the, uh, Pentagon papers ...

Uh, I don't think that this [transfer by Gordon Strachan of \$300,000 left over from the 1968 campaign back to the Committee for the Re-election of the President] is the problem that Dean seems to think it is, but of course he's—has to warn against every loose end that might come out, particularly in view of some of the things that have come out up to this point. They are going to meet with Mitchell in the morning, and I, uh, hope that Mitchell will really put his mind to this thing and perhaps out of it all can come so—some sort of a course of action we can follow. Uh, it seems to me just to hunker down without making any kind of a statement is really, uh, too dangerous.

former White House "plumber" G. Gordon Liddy was envisioned "instead" of an abortive undercover White House operation named Sandwedge.

Strachan's memo was one of a series written for Haldeman before the 1972 election, and taken together they clearly established the minute details with which Mr. Nixon's chief of staff was concerned—from a \$25 raise for Mr. Nixon's gardener at San Clemente to a \$25,000 telephone campaign for the New Hampshire primary. Another memo indicated that Haldeman had \$350,000 in cash ("350 green") from the Nixon war chest transferred to his personal control in early 1972. Haldeman later maintained that this fund was meant to pay for political polling, but the Feb. 1 memo—initialed H—expressly stated that the Nixon finance committee itself would pay for any such polling.

The committee's statement of fact ran through the conflicting testimony detailing how Liddy's initially grandiose cloak-and-dagger plans were gradually cut back and finally approved while Mitchell

was vacationing at Key Biscayne. And it noted that Charles Colson, Mr. Nixon's special counsel, weighed in with a call to deputy campaign director Jeb Magruder, urging him to "resolve whatever it was Hunt and Liddy wanted to do and be sure he had an opportunity to listen to their plans."

'A SOPHISTICATED SYSTEM'

There was also a long-standing interest at the Nixon White House in Democratic National Chairman Lawrence O'Brien, whose Watergate office was one of Liddy's prime targets. According to formerly secret grand-jury testimony by John Dean, Haldeman made "periodic requests" for intelligence on O'Brien. And when Dean told Haldeman of Liddy's developing plans—including "muggings and buggings and prostitutes and the like," he testified—the chief of staff simply agreed that "I shouldn't have any part of it." There was no evidence that Haldeman wished to kill the plan.

Once Magruder had given the green light to Liddy, the evidence indicated,

Strachan told Haldeman in writing that the CRP "has now a sophisticated intelligence gathering system including a budget of 300 [\$300,000]." And the committee noted that the same subject was reportedly included in a talking paper Strachan prepared for Haldeman before his April 4, 1972, meetings with Mitchell and the President. Haldeman has testified that he did not recall the references to a CRP intelligence plan and that the subject did not come up in the April 4 Oval Office discussion. But according to the evidence, he was sufficiently aware of the system later in April to have Strachan contact Liddy and order him to transfer whatever "capability" he had from the founding campaign of Sen. Edmund Muskie to that of George McGovern. Haldeman does not recall giving that order either.

By the second week in June, wiretap information from DNC headquarters at the Watergate was being supplied to Magruder on stationery labeled Gemstone, the code name for Liddy's operation. On June 17, five men—including

THE EVIDENCE

CRP security officer James McCord—were arrested inside the DNC offices. They were indicted on Sept. 15, along with Hunt and Liddy.

THE FIRST INVESTIGATION

In the aftermath of the Watergate arrests, the second volume of committee evidence makes clear, top White House staffers were caught up in a frenzied effort to determine their vulnerabilities and deter or divert a parallel investigation by the Justice Department. And there were strong indications that President Nixon himself was aware—or at least suspicious—almost immediately that the break-in was not just what White House spokesman Ron Ziegler termed “a third-rate burglary attempt.”

Two days after the arrests, Mr. Nixon phoned Colson—Hunt’s patron at the White House—to ask what he knew of the fiasco. “He was quite obviously angered and incredulous that anyone even remotely involved with the Presidential campaign apparatus could have engaged in such conduct,” said Colson in a draft of a statement he never got to deliver at last summer’s Watergate hearings. In subsequent conversations, Colson said, the President “complained bitterly” that the CRP was overstaffed and overpaid and that “Watergate was an example of the kind of misguided enterprise that results from too much money.”

The next day, June 20, Mr. Nixon also discussed Watergate with Haldeman, who had himself been going over it with domestic adviser John Ehrlichman, Mitchell and Dean. Exactly what the President learned remains a mystery, however, because that portion of the conversation was irretrievably lost in an eighteen-and-a-half-minute buzz on the White House tape. The committee’s evidence included the court-ordered report by a panel of audio experts that the buzz had been made by at least five erasures. Also included were Haldeman’s handwritten notes of the session: “PR offensive to top this . . . we should be on the attack—for diversion.”

Mr. Nixon’s telephone conversation with Mitchell about Watergate that same day was not recorded, the White House has said. And it supplied a Dictabelt recording made by the President afterward indicating that the former Attorney General was simply “chagrined that, uh . . . he had not policed all the people more effectively.” On June 21, Mitchell has admitted, he learned that Liddy and Magruder were involved, and by June 30 it appeared that the scandal might reach back to Mitchell himself. “There is always the risk,” said the President, urging his campaign director to resign—ostensibly for personal reasons—and thus “cut the loss fast.”

On July 31, Mr. Nixon personally discussed Magruder’s role with Ehrlichman, though there is no record of what was said. Nonetheless, two months later—after the initial, limited Watergate indictments were handed down—the Pres-

ident still maintained publicly that he had “every lead carried out to the end . . . to be sure that no member of the White House staff and no man or woman in a position of major responsibility in the [CRP] had anything to do with this kind of reprehensible activity.” That contrasted sharply with the President’s tape-recorded remarks congratulating John Dean on Sept. 15. “The way . . . you’ve handled it, it seems to me,” said Mr. Nixon, “has been very skillful, because you—putting your fingers in the dikes every time that leaks have sprung here and sprung there.”

CIA v. FBI

A prime example of diversionary dike-plugging turns up in the tangle of evidence surrounding the peculiar misunderstanding between the FBI and CIA, a situation that delayed important elements of the Watergate investigation for weeks. In an interview with FBI acting director L. Patrick Gray III, Dean learned of several bureau theories about the break-in, including the notion that it might be a covert operation of the CIA. He relayed this idea to Haldeman, who mentioned it to the President, who in

turn told Haldeman and Ehrlichman to order the CIA itself to request a curb on the FBI investigation.

In a statement on May 22, 1973, the President said he had been “deeply concerned with ensuring that neither the covert operations of the CIA nor the operations of the Special Investigations Unit [plumbers] should be compromised”—Hunt and Liddy having both been aboard that project for the Ellsberg break-in. But Ehrlichman, the evidence pointed out, told the Senate Watergate Committee that “the question of the special unit . . . just was not in the contemplation of anybody that I was talking to, so far as I can recall.” CIA deputy director Vernon Walters remembered that Haldeman told him on June 23 that the FBI investigation “was leading to a lot of important people and this could get worse . . . that the whole affair was getting embarrassing and it was the President’s wish that . . . since the five suspects had been arrested that this should be sufficient.”

Despite the fact that CIA boss Richard Helms assured Haldeman and Ehrlichman that there was no CIA involvement, the evidence showed that Helms and

Cutting Mitchell’s Loss

Ten days after the Watergate break-in, President Nixon, H.R. Haldeman and John Mitchell discuss Mitchell’s resignation as re-election chairman—and why it should be publicly described as a personal matter. Excerpts:

HALDEMAN: Well, there maybe is another facet. The longer you wait the more risk each hour brings. You run the risk of more stuff, valid or invalid, surfacing on the Watergate caper—type of thing—

MITCHELL: You couldn’t possibly do it if you got into a—

HALDEMAN: —the potential problem and then you are stuck—

PRESIDENT: Yes, that’s the other thing, if something does come out, but we won’t—we hope nothing will. It may not. But there is always the risk.

HALDEMAN: As of now there is no problem there. As, as of any moment in the future there is at least a potential problem.

PRESIDENT: Well, I’d cut the loss fast. I’d cut it fast. If we’re going to do it I’d cut it fast. That’s my view, generally speaking. And I wouldn’t—and I don’t think . . . the story, if we, if you put it in human terms—I think the story is, you’re positive rather than negative, because as I said as I was preparing to answer for this press conference, I just wrote it out, as I usually do, one way—terribly sensitive (unintelligible). A hell of a lot of people will like that answer. They would. And it’d make anybody else who

asked any other question on it look like a selfish son-of-a-bitch, which I thoroughly intended them to look like.

* * *

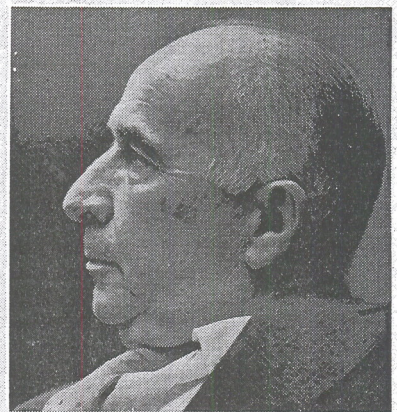
MITCHELL: (Unintelligible) Westchester Country Club with all the sympathy in the world.

PRESIDENT: That’s great. That’s great.

* * *

HALDEMAN: You taking this route—people won’t expect you to—be a surprise.

PRESIDENT: No—if it’s a sur-



Lawrence McIntosh

prise. Otherwise, you’re right. It will be tied right to Watergate. (unintelligible) tighten if you wait too long, till it simmers down.

HALDEMAN: You can’t if other stuff develops on Watergate. The problem is, it’s always potentially the same thing.

Walters (to a far greater extent than previously revealed) did flash warning signals to Gray in an extended series of meetings, memos and phone calls. Finally, Gray himself complained to the President in a passionate phone conversation about the growing pressure. Before the Watergate grand jury, he recalled telling Mr. Nixon that "people on your staff are trying to mortally wound you by using the CIA and FBI." Gray heard a long pause on the line and then the President said, "Pat, you just continue to conduct your aggressive and thorough investigation."

HUSH MONEY?

Did Mr. Nixon approve the payment of hush money to E. Howard Hunt on March 21, 1973? That question may be a key to the impeachment drama, and the committee devoted two full volumes

way or another over the years. When this failed, Dean received approval from Mitchell, Haldeman and Ehrlichman to have Herbert Kalmbach, the President's personal lawyer, collect the cash.* Mitchell apparently saw it more as an obligation of the White House than of the CRP; "He thought they [Haldeman and Ehrlichman] would be very interested in seeing this problem dealt with," Dean told the Watergate grand jury.

Clearly there was some unease at the White House. Less than a month after the break-in, Ehrlichman told the grand jury, he and the President were discussing the importance of not having Mr. Nixon linked to any consideration of Executive clemency for the burglars. Wasn't such talk, he was asked, a bit premature? "I think I raised this in the sense that there were only a couple of ways that [Watergate] could ever be im-

called Colson to ask for more money. "We're protecting the guys who are really responsible," he told the President's chief political adviser, who recorded the conversation. Shortly thereafter, Haldeman agreed to transfer his \$350,000 back to the CRP where it would be used for further payoffs. Subsequent demands from Hunt, in a letter following his wife's death in a plane crash, prompted Colson's "Now what the hell do I do?" note to Dean.

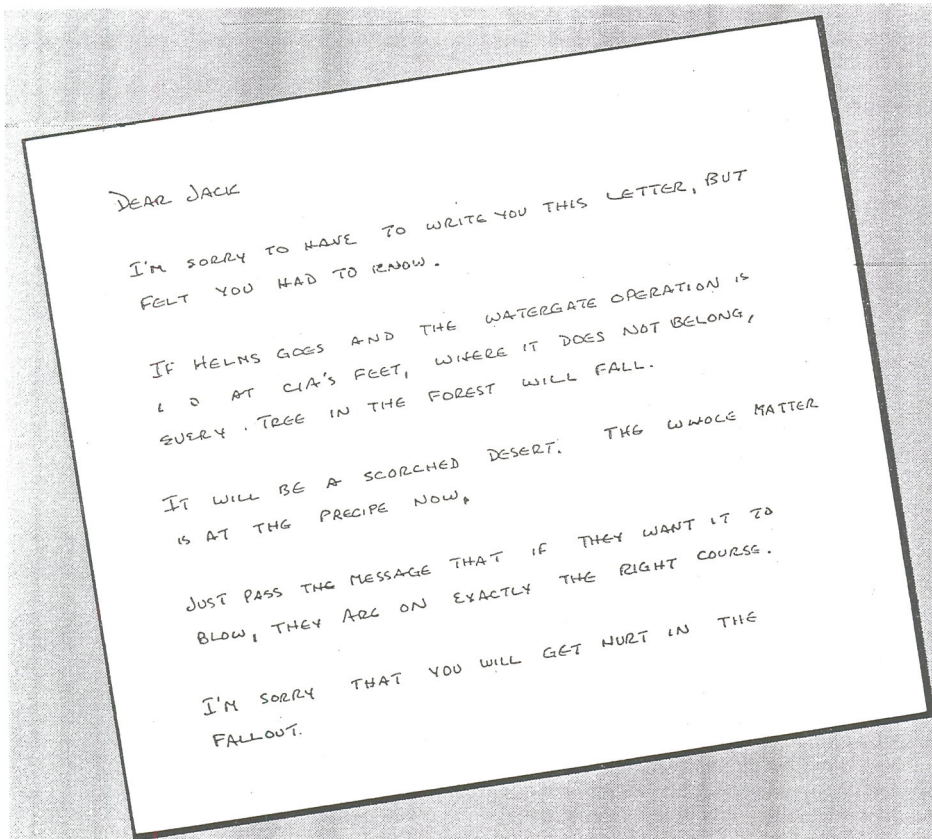
The crunch came in March, when Hunt passed word through CRP lawyer Paul O'Brien that he had done many "seamy" things for the White House and that if "commitments" totaling \$130,000 were not met he would have to "review my options." In the Senate hearings Hunt denied this was meant as a threat, but before the grand jury he conceded there was no other interpretation. On March 20, Dean discussed the matter with Mitchell and, separately, with Ehrlichman, who met shortly afterward with the President. That conversation, the White House said last week, was accidentally missed by Mr. Nixon's secret Sonys, but the likelihood remained that Hunt's ultimatum was discussed.

The next day, after the crucial March 21 discussion of the cover-up and Hunt's demands—"That's a buy time thing," said the President. "You better damn well get that done..."—Haldeman called Mitchell. Both men deny discussing a payoff, saying the call was merely to arrange Mitchell's visit to Washington next day. But that afternoon the President was assured that Mitchell was aware of the problem. And that evening, Mitchell's man LaRue asked a dinner guest, Manyon Millican, to deliver \$75,000 to Hunt's lawyer. The payoff date was determined through another guest's travel records and the odd coincidence that LaRue's fireplace malfunctioned, filling the house memorably with smoke.

Mr. Nixon was also to mark the day, although his dictated recollections that night were low-key. Dean, he said, had "let it all hang out," but the President mentioned nothing about the "intensive new inquiries" he later claimed to have initiated that day. He seemed critical of Magruder, who was beginning to talk with the prosecutors, and proud of Strachan, who continued to stonewall. He noted that Dean had recognized Hunt's demands as "pure blackmail" and ran through arguments for giving out a sanitized version of the Watergate story—or refusing to reveal anything. The latter, he concluded, was "too dangerous as far as the President..." A 57-second silence followed.

THE COLLAPSING COVER-UP

It was about that time—in March and early April of 1973—that the original cover-up began to fall apart. But the clear pattern of events described in the committee's last section of evidence raised further doubts about the President's eagerness to expose the facts and



McCord's letter to Caulfield: The silence was cracking

to the string of payments and perjuries that culminated in the late-night delivery of \$75,000 in cash to Hunt's lawyer.

Within days after the Watergate arrests, previous testimony shows, Liddy explained the entire project to Mitchell aides Frederick LaRue and Robert Mardian, told them about his and Hunt's involvement in the Ellsberg break-in and declared that the CRP was committed to providing financial support. Mitchell rejected this notion, and for several days Dean tried to persuade the CIA to take on the obligation, arguing that Hunt, McCord and several of the other arrested men had served the agency one

puted to the President," Ehrlichman explained, "and obviously this [granting clemency] was one of those ways."

The problem posed by Hunt and the other defendants appeared more serious that winter with their impending trial and the birth of Sen. Sam Ervin's Watergate committee. While Executive privilege or other devices might shield past and present Nixon aides from testifying, could they be sure the Watergate crew would keep silent? In November, Hunt

*Surprisingly, Kalmbach simply went to campaign finance chairman Maurice Stans for much of the \$187,500 he ultimately dispensed through ex-cop Tony Ulasevich and Hunt's wife, Dorothy.

punish wrongdoers. When Mr. Nixon talked with Mitchell, Ehrlichman and Dean on March 22, it was suggested that Dean might prepare a report on the cover-up—but only in such general terms that the President might have a base for his past assurances that no top Nixon men were involved. “Make it very incomplete,” the President had told Dean earlier. “I don’t want a, too much in chapter and verse.” “It’s a modified limited hang out,” Ehrlichman said. Added the President: “We can’t make a complete cave and have the people go up there and testify” to the Ervin committee.

During that session, too, the President called Attorney General Richard Kleindienst, but not to pass along Dean’s disclosures or to order him to undertake any new investigation. Instead, Mr. Nixon told the AG he was to be the Administration’s “handholder” to Sen. Howard Baker, ranking Republican on the Watergate committee, who had started pressing for White House staffers to appear in public session. “It is essential for him to stick to your guidance,” said the President. “You’ll babysit him, starting like in about ten minutes?”

TELL IT TO THE JUDGE

But then the Nixon men suddenly found they were no longer in control of the situation: on March 23, Judge John Sirica disclosed a letter from Watergate conspirator McCord charging that higher-ups were involved in the break-in and responsible for a chain of political pressure and perjury throughout the first Watergate trial. McCord’s decision to talk could not have come as a complete surprise; the ex-CIA man had previously warned the White House in a precise, hand-lettered note that “every tree in the forest will fall” if his old agency was made the scapegoat for Watergate.

By the first week of April, Mr. Nixon had a report from Ehrlichman that Magruder, Colson and Dean might soon be implicated. The two men talked about sending Dean to the grand jury. “The President said that Mitchell should decide whether to tell Dean to lie,” said the committee’s summary of a White House-edited transcript of that session. “The President concluded by telling Ehrlichman that Magruder had better plead the Fifth Amendment and we don’t want Mitchell popping off.”

Eventually, though, the search for scenarios and scapegoats led Mr. Nixon and his men to want Mitchell to talk—if he would take the blame. By mid-March, Dean told the Watergate grand jury, they had already pegged the former AG as a “big enough fish” to satisfy those who charged the President with covering up. On April 14, Ehrlichman met with Mitchell to tell him that Mr. Nixon did not want him feeling bound to silence in the interest of the Presidency. “He is extraordinarily troubled by the situation in which you find yourself, and, and therefore everybody finds themselves,” said Ehrlichman. But Mitchell was not

Howard Hunt’s ‘Threat’

Watergate defendants insist that the payment of \$75,000 to E. Howard Hunt on March 21 was for legal expenses, not hush money. But under questioning before the grand jury by assistant special prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste, Hunt conceded that a threat was involved. Excerpts from the interrogation:

HUNT: Well, the interpretation, again, I placed on it was that I had been involved in “seamy things” for the White House . . . and . . . having done this kind of work for them before, [I] felt that they had, in effect, a double obligation to me.

BEN-VENISTE: That’s the first half of it. But the second half is that you will review your options if your demands aren’t met. And what does that mean?

HUNT: Well, it sort of means what a parent says to a child. “If you don’t bring home the car at 11:00 tonight, I’ll have to give further consideration to our relationship.” I mean, in other words, what does that mean really? It’s just a form of speech, I think.

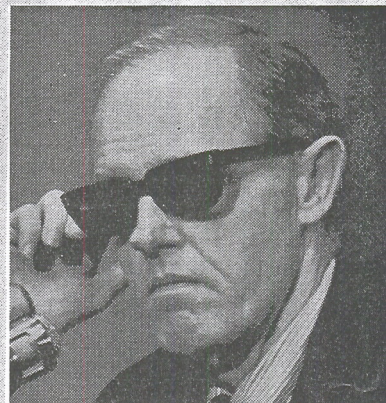
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BEN-VENISTE: The point is, Mr. Hunt . . . we’re asking you, under oath before this Grand Jury, if you can provide any other explanation other than what the plain words mean that you would review your options.

HUNT: Well, I know that at one point I was contemplating suicide.

BEN-VENISTE: Mr. Hunt, that is not in your mind at the time. You were not threatening or stating to [CRP counsel Paul] O’Brien, at this time, were you, that if these monies were not paid that you would commit suicide?

HUNT: No.



Lawrence McClintock

BEN-VENISTE: You don’t mean to seriously suggest that?

HUNT: No, I don’t. But you’re asking me now to project for you what was in my mind. This is one of the things that was in my mind.

* * *

BEN-VENISTE: Now, going back to the initial question, Mr. Hunt, is there any other interpretation one could place other than the plain meaning when you said you would review your options other than the fact that unless they met your demands you would tell about the seamy things?

HUNT: I would like to consult with counsel on that point.

(Permission is received)

* * *

BEN-VENISTE: The question was one which has been restated several times, but, again, is there any other interpretation other than the clear meaning of the words that you would review your options for alternatives other than that you would tell about these so-called seamy things unless they met your demands?

HUNT: No.

BEN-VENISTE: Thank you.

about to take a dive. “There is no way that I’m going to do anything except staying where I am because I’m too far, uh, far out,” Mitchell declared. “I got euchred into this thing . . . by not paying attention to what these bastards were doing, and uh, well you know how far back this goes—this, uh, whole genesis of this thing was over here [in the White House]—as you know.”

At the end, last week’s evidence shows, Mr. Nixon himself took an increasingly active hand in the deepening crisis, dealing primarily with the Justice Department and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen. In multiple calls and meetings on an almost daily basis, the President tried to learn as much as he could about what Magruder, Dean and others might be saying—and to adjust his defenses accordingly. On April 15 he talked to both Petersen and Kleindienst, but did not pass on all he had

been told about Watergate and the cover-up. On April 16, Mr. Nixon promised Petersen not to divulge any grand-jury information he was given, but the next day he passed on to Haldeman Petersen’s word that LaRue had talked freely to the panel about payoffs.

Later, the President suggested to Petersen that he had become the “White House counsel” on Watergate. And as if that were not a difficult enough position for the man trying to direct the new prosecution, Mr. Nixon also asked him if he was interested in the post of FBI director. It was, Petersen subsequently told the grand jury, “frankly . . . a little heavy-handed.” It was also the end of the first cover-up: within days, Magruder, Dean, Kleindienst, Ehrlichman and Haldeman had resigned. And the President, for all his efforts, was closer than anyone realized to the ordeal of impeachment that faces him now.