

WXPost
AUG 6 1974
**Congressmen
Getting Replay
Of Nixon Tape**

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It isn't every day your ordinary congressman gets to eavesdrop on his President in private conversation, and so some of them started making the most of the opportunity yesterday.

Small groups of House members collected in four separate rooms, clamped headsets over their ears, and settled down to hear what John W. Dean III said to President Nixon on March 13, 1973, or what President Nixon said into his personal Dictabelt on June 20, 1972.

What they heard didn't seem to change their minds about whether or not to impeach the President.

"Very depressing," said Rep. James V. Stanton (D-Ohio), who some time ago announced he'd vote for impeachment.

"What I heard today is not all that unusual," said Rep. Jack Edwards (R-Ala.), who has said he's yet to see evidence of an impeachable offense.

The unusual listen-in which began yesterday was part of the House Judiciary Committee's effort to give all 435 House members the chance to hear the same evidence that it heard in arriving at an impeachment recommendation.

All week long, following an elaborate schedule worked out by Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.), congressmen can hear the key tapes obtained by the committee. They are screened at the doorway by House doormen trained to recognize their faces, and visitors are not allowed in.

By their reactions, few congressmen heard anything they hadn't expected or hadn't read in transcripts already made public.

Democrats who long have favored impeachment found confirmation for their views.

"The thing that most surprised me was the amount of involvement the President had in the meetings when they were talking about trying to influence the Banking Committee or the Ervin committee," said Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.), a proponent of impeachment. "There was more back and forth participation than I had thought. The important thing was how much he knew what was going on and that he gave so many instructions."

Even those sympathetic to Mr. Nixon agreed that it could not be argued that he was being directed by subordinates.

"When the transcripts came out, some of us felt that the President was being led by his subordinates," observed Rep. Robert W. Daniel Jr. (R-Va.). "But I don't get that from the tapes. He allows them to interrupt and to disagree with him, but it's clear he's not allowing them to bully him."

But Daniel had not decided whether, all in all, hearing the tapes made him more or less disposed to vote for impeachment.

Congressman Edwards believes he sensed that the Nixon administration's distrust of the news media had a lot to do with how they planned to deal with Watergate.

"A lot of what transpired had to do with the feeling that the press was out to get them and that they couldn't level with the media," he said. "They reacted in the wrong way because they misperceived what the press would say."

Edwards said he also detected a theme familiar in discussions among Republicans—that they hadn't learned how to play politics as well as Democrats had. Edwards explained:

"When he was talking about showing up The Washington Post, or monkeying around with television licenses, or using the government agencies—that's the old Republican theory that we have got to learn to play the game like the Democrats do. I could see what he was talking about because a lot of us have talked at times about how the Democrats are better this game than we are.

"On the whole, I felt a little better after hearing them than when I went in."

Edwards took notes, and when he came to a March 13, 1973, conversation with Dean, former White House counsel, he made this notation: "First place President gets an inkling the White House is involved."

Some have heard the same words and concluded that the President knew the whole story then, rather than on March 21 as he has said repeatedly.

"Well," said Edwards, "he knew that (Gordon) Strachan was involved (on March 13 and it seemed then that (H.R.) Haldeman knew something. But it was no big expose. It was nowhere near what he learned on March 21."

Those who feel Mr. Nixon is guilty merely found their suspicions confirmed. "Everyone knew what they were doing (in the conversations) and that it was a massive conspiracy to obstruct justice," said Rep. Ben Rosenthal (D-N.Y.), a pro-impeachment member.

Hearing the tapes gave Rosenthal an "eerie kind of feeling. I never listened in before when people didn't know I was listening."

Rosenthal discovered one difference of opinion with a Democratic colleague who also favors impeachment.

"My friend said he thinks that the tapes should be destroyed because he doesn't want to have the American people ever hear such talk by their President," Rosenthal said.

"I had just the opposite reaction. I'd like to put them in a museum to show people how the power of government can be used."