

Dan Rather, Bruce Morton, Phil Jones, Bob Schieffer, ^fGred Graham

Rather: Special prosecutor Leon Jaworski so far publicly has said nothing. Before the Ford and Nixon announcements of today, the Washington Star-News, in its Sunday editions, quoted informed sources as saying that prosecutor Jaworski was insisting on some form of admission by Nixon as part of any deal. On August 28th President Ford said that Jaworski had an obligation to do his duty in connection with any prosecution of Nixon for Watergate offenses. But the final deal, as it turned out, was negotiated between Nixon's lawyers and the White House - not just the arrangements for the pardon but also the giving of the tapes to Nixon.

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Rather: You may recall that members of the original Federal grand jury that investigated and returned indictments in the Watergate case said they had wanted to indict then-President Nixon but had been told they could not legally do so as long as he was in office. Phil Jones has a follow-up.

Jones: The members of the original Watergate grand jury are extremely upset by President Ford's decision. This is the same grand jury that voted earlier this year to name Richard Nixon as an undicted co-conspirator, and the jurors would have indicted him had it not been for the legal advice from special prosecutor Jaworski that a sitting President could not be indicted. There was reportedly a straw vote taken by the jurors at that time. Eighteen were present, and when asked if they would like to indict then-President Nixon, most of those present held up both hands. Now some members of this grand jury are described as having "hit the ceiling." Their words of reaction to the President's decision today: "outrageous," "furious," "baffled." One juror is quoted as saying, "The President talks about proclaiming domestic tranquillity and simple justice, yet we have people in Canada who can't come home because they don't have full Presidential pardon or any indication that they're going to get it," that being a reference to Vietnam draft-evaders. The jurors are puzzled over whether they have any recourse, but it is known that some of them feel that indictments of other Nixon aides are totally unfair if the same justice system is not applied to Nixon. One juror is quoted as saying, "Here we sat on this case for two and a half years, doing what we thought was right. Now this happens. It is worse than the way the Agnew thing was handled." End quote.

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Rather: ... Phil Jones ... is just off the telephone from a few moments ago, talking with Benton Becker, whom I understand, Phil, was the man designated by the White House lawyers to go out to California and discuss with President Nixon, personally, this deal, or these representatives of the former President.

Jones: Yes, he went out to represent the White House in this and to work with Mr. Nixon and his lawyers. He left on Thursday evening [5 Sep] for San Clemente, and going out with him was Jack Miller, who is President Nixon's attorney. They arrived in San Clemente Thursday night, met first with press secretary Ron Ziegler, and discussed a draft pardon which he had in his pocket, and also the details of the handling of the tapes and personal documents. They worked with Mr. Ziegler on Thursday night and Friday [6 Sep], and Friday afternoon met for the first time with the former President in his office at the San Clemente compound. According to Mr. Becker, he saw the President probably about an hour, totally, during the time on Friday -

Rather: Excuse me, Phil, you mean the former President.

Jones: That's right, the former President. He said that the former President was - quote - "Pleased that I was out there. He was warm and thoughtful." Becker said, "I didn't go there for any arm-twisting," and he said, "I think the former President understood that." He described the former President as being very alert, although he said he did look quite tired. But, in all, Mr. Becker said that Mr. Nixon appeared to be very pleased about the prospect of a pardon and the resolution of handling the tapes and documents.
