

Nixon: It Should Never 'Get Out

Following are excerpts from the transcript of a telephone conversation between President Nixon and his former special counsel, Charles W. Colson, on March 21, 1973, from 7:35 to 8:24 p.m.:

COLSON: . . . we'll defend the Administration if we know what the facts are

PRESIDENT: What's your judgment as to what, (clears throat) what ought to be done now. You know, there's various discussions about, uh, whether, uh, should be, uh, a report made or something, you know, uh, report to, uh, the President or just hunker down and take it or what, what have you, and so forth and so on.

COLSON: Well, my feelings, Mr. President, uh, thus far, frankly, is that you're not being hurt by this at all. That this is, a, a, a Washington story still and that, that sounds incredible after all this time and all this publicity but I, I, I'm convinced that, uh, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: But you see, looking to the future, I suppose, Chuck, what some of our fellows that are, you know, like, uh, when Dean, who's really done a superb job here keeping all the fires out, he's, (clears throat) he's concerned about, you know, what, what bubbles out, you know.

COLSON: Yeah, well Dean has a problem also, Mr. President. I, I didn't want to say this to you, uh, Monday night when you mentioned to me that, uh, uh, that, that Dean has done a spectacular job. I don't think anybody could do as good a job as John has done. The, the problem I foresee in this is not what has happened so far—I mean I, I think the, uh, the mystery of the Watergate, uh, I don't know whether somebody's gonna, uh, somebody else higher up in the Committee for the Re-Election is gonna get named or not but, uh, to me that isn't of very great consequence to the country if it, if it happens. Then thing that worries me is that, is the possibility of somebody, uh, charging an obstruction of justice problem—in other words that the subsequent actions would worry me more than anything and it, that's where John has, you know, he's done all the things that have to be done but, that, that makes him a little more of a participant than, than you would like if you, if you, if, uh, he's the fellow that has to, uh, coordinate it all. It's in, uh—of course, he's got the best privilege, he's got a double privilege but, you know the, the subsequent developments would be the only ones that would worry me. I don't worry about the, uh, how the Watergate came about. I think that's been so milked out that they get someone else, well they get 'em, that's all. And if there's testimony, it'll . . .

PRESIDENT: Um huh.

COLSON: . . . it will get so God-damn confused. It's, it's may be the stuff after, uh, afterward that . . .

PRESIDENT: You mean, uh, the me- you- been saying uh, the, the, with regard to the defendants? Of course, that was all . . .

COLSON: Yeah, that, that's, that's that area I mean, that general area.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Of course, that was . . .

COLSON: I don't want to burden you with any . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . that had to be done. (Laughs)

COLSON: Hell, yeah. No, I'm not—no second thoughts. That's not the point.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: The point is that, just that, it limits the ability now to . . .

That We Taped This

Office'

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: . . . to stand up to it. I don't know, uh, I've thought of several things. I've thought of trying to get a, uh, a special counsel in to you that could, uh, uh, you, you . . .

PRESIDENT: We could appoint, you mean?

COLSON: Yeah, that you could appoint. Not, not as an investigator but as a counsel. Just to handle the God-damn thing on the grounds that you don't want the Justice Department handling it, and you don't want the regular White House staff handling it—they've got their work to do.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: And, uh, you appoint a man of . . .

PRESIDENT: Which has . . .

COLSON: . . . totally impeccable uh, credentials, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Um, huh.

COLSON: . . . a man known for his integrity, uh, standing before the Bar, you know, that kind of thing. But, a guy who is also totally loyal or just a damned good lawyer who would be professional then. That's one thought that I've been playing with the last couple of days.

PRESIDENT: Yeap. Hum.

COLSON: We have an advantage, you see, of getting all the, the people who have been in one way or another participating out of the damn thing so that you, you've got a guy who, uh, frankly can, can deal with, uh, deal with anybody he has to deal with.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: Special counsel.

PRESIDENT: I think they have, of course, of course, you've got the problem of what the judge is gonna say Friday. I suppose he's gonna have quite an harangue, isn't he?

COLSON: Oh yeah, yeah, he's he's . . .

then, of course, you've got the problem of, uh, the defendants, particularly Hunt. What he, what's he gonna do. That's always a problem, I know.

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Of course he's got problems if he does anything. You know whether he's, uh . . .

COLSON: Oh, that's right.

PRESIDENT: You know what I mean, He's, uh . . .

COLSON: Yes, sir, I, my own opinion of that is that he, uh, that he just will hang in where he is. I mean, I think he, uh, that, at the moment I think that's in, in as good shape as it can be. Uh, you never know—lot of . . .

PRESIDENT: There're a lot of pressures on him, lot of pressures. Sure are

COLSON: Yeah, hell of a lot. But it's uh, but, no—I think what you'll

get is another harangue from the judge and, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Probably calling don't you imagine, for the grand jury to go back into session and call everybody again.

COLSON: Yes sir, yeah, U.S. attorney's already, uh, already indicated he was gonna do that, so, the judge is bound to use that, that ploy to grandstand that but that doesn't trouble me too much . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, I wo-, I don't

have any problem frankly, or, or a hell of a lot rather have everybody in the White House staff and former White House staff members called before a grand jury than I would before, uh, (laughs) the committee, wouldn't you?

COLSON: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely, there's nothing, as a matter of fact, well, all, uh, everybody in the White House staff, former White House staff has been before the grand jury.

PRESIDENT: Right, except, except for, of course, Haldeman, Ehrlichman.

COLSON: That's right, I guess now . . .

PRESIDENT: See you . . .

COLSON: gave depositions. Uh, but there—of course Ehrlichman talked to the, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: FBI.

COLSON: . . . FBI. Yeah, (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: But that, that, see that's the part that they might want to get info, which I would understand.

COLSON: Sure, well that—that wouldn't bother me, of course, you, you do have privilege questions that, I mean, uh, there's the question of where and when you waive privilege that, uh, we'd have to worry of . . .

PRESIDENT: But it'd be very difficult to waive it—to, to claim it for a grand jury, I think.

COLSON: That's right. For a grand jury you could have . . .

PRESIDENT: I don't think you can really waive it. I don't think you can really, uh, stand with it, I mean. Before a Senate committee it's one thing. Before a grand jury I think something else.

COLSON: That's right. Yeah, or, or, uh, in a civil proceeding in open court or in a, uh, deposition in a civil proceeding or, or in a congressional hearing you've got one set of rules, in the grand jury where there's secrecy . . .

PRESIDENT: That's a different matter.

COLSON: It's a different matter, that's right.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: There'd be still some area that would be privileged but I think the privilege would be much narrower.

PRESIDENT: Right.

COLSON: Obviously some areas that would be privileged but I think that . . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

COLSON: . . . might be considered. I, I don't think really at this point in time, uh, Mr. President, that—it was interesting, I, I—Brenson said they'd had no reaction from Tennessee, none whatsoever. Uh, and I, I just don't think another harangue by the judge or, uh—I just . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, I think the harangue will probably have s-, you know, it will get another television story and we'll get a, uh, you know, uh, a little, a more the, that yo-, it'll, it will hit, hit the networks, it all—it's like ITT. It sort of builds up over

a period of time.

COLSON: That's right. It doesn't, th, th, the—but they keep hitting at it because they just don't have anything else to use. Well, it's the . . .

PRESIDENT: That's quite true.

COLSON: They can make the mystery out of it and, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: . . . and that's the damn, damnable part.

PRESIDENT: That's why, uh, some kind of a, even a bland statement is probably worthwhile. I don't know how we can get it out, but maybe we have to at one point.

COLSON: Well, if, if there's anything to be, anything more to be said—I, I almost think you're in the, uh, in the right posture, right at the moment. The only question that I have in my mind, uh, Mr. President, is whether it's, whether it would be an advantage to you to have someone who, uh, has no, uh, background in this area at all, an-, and's had no involvement, has been on the outside, uh, brought in simply to, uh, to coordinate it all so that, uh—highly respected guy who could sort of . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, the ideal guy would be Fortas, if he, uh, hadn't been involved, huh?

COLSON: Yeah, he's uh, he's pretty tarred. He would be very good.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, He's what you need.

COLSON: Yeah, that's right. Another fellow, uh, uh, that I thought about is Rankin because he's, uh, highly respected. He, he, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Walsh?

COLSON: Yeah, 'cept, yeah Walsh.

Following are excerpts of a transcript of a meeting between President Nixon and White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman on April 26, 1973, from 8:55 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. Haldeman has just finished reviewing tapes from the still-secret presidential taping system, and he is briefing Nixon:

PRESIDENT: Now let's look at this business. First with regard to these struct it, but I think that the, for, for your information, the directive I've given you is, uh, its been customary without, and I, I don't think it should ever get out that we taped this office, Bob. Have we got people that are trustworthy on that? I guess we have.

HALDEMAN: I think so.

PRESIDENT: If it does, the answer is yes. We only, but we only taped the national security, uh, information. All other, all other, all other information is scrapped, never transcribed. Get the point? That's what I want you to remember on these, if you will. See my

point. That's just a memorandum for your file basically that you make, that you are, but, uh—I think that's very important, very important. You never want to be in a position to say the President taped it, you know. I mean taped somebody.

HALDEMAN: Well, the whole purpose of this was for national security.

PRESIDENT: That's right, I uh, . . .

HALDEMAN: The reason they were

PRESIDENT: You mean . . .

HALDEMAN: . . . other steps were taken . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah. I know, I know.

HALDEMAN: . . . for taking other places.

PRESIDENT: I know but I just don't want this to be—I just don't want that tape for example, I don't want you to. I don't want you to disclose that to Ehrlichman or anybody else, I mean that's just something—I know what you can tell Ehrlichman. Just say you went over it and it's the same as . . .

HALDEMAN: I've, I've already,

what I said to him is, is that the tape—he knows I . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: . . . went over it, of course. Uh, I said, "It it basically says what the President recalled."

PRESIDENT: That's right. Now, with regard to the . . .

HALDEMAN: Which it does. It's—your recollection of that was almost, almost verbatim, (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Not very, not completely. The question is whether or not—did I at that time, order Dean to pay off Hunt, "Go to work, Dean . . ."

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: ". . . the money to pay him off."

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Not at the point that (unintelligible). You're sure I didn't. Didn't I say, "Well, now what ought to be done is to put the cork in the bottle," or some damn silly thing. I don't know. I thought I . . .

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but if it was, that was rescinded and it was a, and it was a, it was a, "shouldn't we do this, we at least have to do that." You were drawing him out. You did not order him to.

PRESIDENT: With regard to clemency if the subject ever comes up, you could say it, uh . . . must have, quite (unintelligible) obviously, it, uh, —you can say it and, "The matter was discussed (unintelligible) the people." And the way it came up, is that, I there talk about uh, doing it before Christmas, you know, doing it at Christmas. And I said, "Well, you couldn't even consider it until after 1974. We do it without the elections." You understand?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I mean couldn't even consider it, I mean that's the point, because, because that puts it more in of the crime, see what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: I don't know, do you?

HALDEMAN: I don't . . .

PRESIDENT: What troubles me is whether Dean, Dean has made a memorandum of this. Well, the fact that he had memoranda is irrelevant with what (unintelligible) . . .

Haldeman: Well, let's, let's look at this point though.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: That area is totally privileged until you come to an impeachment proceeding. There's no way that that can be brought out because it—there's no way that, that the Presidential, there's no forum for going into Presidential, uh, guilt, except an impeachment.

PRESIDENT: I know.

HALDEMAN: And they have got to impeach you first before the proceeding starts and they aren't going to impeach you.

PRESIDENT: No, I, I slept a little on that and it's good for John to look at it that way. My God, what the hell have we done to be impeached?

HALDEMAN: But John doesn't believe you have either and John doesn't believe you can be impeached.

PRESIDENT: No.

HALDEMAN: Or, or will be. What he believes is . . .

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: . . . That's, that's the game Dean is trying to play.

PRESIDENT: That's right. That's what he's talking.

HALDEMAN: Does not believe it's, uh, it's a game of any potential.

PRESIDENT: Uh. (Pause) I made a call, that's the thing you have to remember, sometime about what the hell we going to do about—what's been done about Hunt, money he's asked for. You know what I mean?

done about Hunt, money he's asked for. You know what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's a possibility, Bob. Now how would you, how would we talk about that policy. (Unintelligible) trying to find out what . . .

HALDEMAN: What he was up to . . .

PRESIDENT: What, what this thing, how deep this thing ran. I had to find out. All right now, the big question: when I learned this on the 21st—why didn't I go running right over to the Attorney General and say, "Look, I found out that Hunt is, Bittman's asking for, for money." It is a question of how long it took me to, to reach the, the conclusion that we reached, you know, that Dean (unintelligible) 14th, you know, Ehrlichman went over to give his report. (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Hmm, you didn't know what the facts were.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: You didn't (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Uh, you didn't know where, where they stood on it, they were still . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: . . . talking to Hunt and all that and it wasn't, there wasn't a timely problem there anyway. I mean it wasn't a matter of something, that whatever Hunt knows or doesn't know, he's gonna go on knowing, or not knowing.

PRESIDENT: No, no. The question is whether or not that, that Hunt, (unintelligible) didn't know, but the fact that an overture had been made by Hunt's attorney for, for payments.

HALDEMAN: But you didn't know what the nature of this payment business was? you didn't know what they were talking about in terms of payments. 'Cause you were trying to smoke it out.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: That's right. Then you trying to smoke out whether that involved other payments and you know, was this the first time and then Dean in this conversation logged in a, it'll take a million dollars over some, over the next year.

PRESIDENT: I, I remember that I logged that in . . .

HALDEMAN: Okay.

PRESIDENT: . . . I can recall . . .

HALDEMAN: Okay. Right. Was that a million dollars to Hunt or to all of the defendants and then it, it, it comes to your attention that somebody has been working something out with the other defendants. You logged that in. Well, you said, what about the Cuban Committee? And, uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I said, uh, I said, "How will you do this?"

HALDEMAN: You didn't, you didn't know, . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . Cuban Committee . . .

HALDEMAN: . . . you didn't . . .

PRESIDENT: I had read about the Cuban Committee in the paper that's true.

HALDEMAN: That's right. Well, then you didn't know then and I submit that you don't know now.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Who did it. Well, I didn't know then . . .

HALDEMAN: Where's the line drawn between a legitimate effort to

"The thing that worries me is that, is the possibility of somebody of somebody charging an obstruction of justice problem—in other words that the sides that the subsequent actions would worry me more than anything and it, that's what it, that's where John (Dean) has, you know, he's done all the things that have to be done have to be done but, that, makes him a little more of a participant than you would like you would like ..."

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"I thought of trying to get a special counsel in to you . . . that you . . . that you could appoint . . . Just to handle the Goddamn thing on the ground that the ground that you don't want the Justice Department handling it . . . a guy who frankly can deal with anybody he has to deal with."

—Charles Colson to President Nixon April 26, 1973; Nixon April 26, 1973



CHARLES W. COLSON

provide legal fees and an illegitimate effort to buy off defendants.

PRESIDENT: Then the question comes, "Mr. President, did you know the effort was even being made to buy—pay legal fees?" And the answer is, I didn't. I did not know that, I didn't know . . .

HALDEMAN: Not till this point.

PRESIDENT: I didn't know about the '350.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I didn't know about the launching of Kalmbach.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: You remember.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I, I did not know, uh, I had read I had read stories to that effect but I didn't frankly look into them. But basically, I frankly had this—I said, "Well, it must be a bunch of Cubans" or something like that, and I thought of (unintelligible). (Both talk at once)

PRESIDENT: I didn't know about La Costa. My point is, and I'm not trying to be selfish, but I, the point is, the story is very true that I didn't know a thing. Now there's only one weakness in that, that, the Pappas thing, the Pappas thing where he said, "Yes, I know about Pappas." But . . .

HALDEMAN: Oh, but that was right in that same time frame.

PRESIDENT: I know I know. But he said, "I understand—Did I say, "I understand that Pappas is helping,"

or, he said, "Pappas was helping?"

HALDEMAN: He said, "Mitchell has talked to Pappas." You just quickly logged it in, . . . know.

PRESIDENT: Yes, yes, I know. Well, the point was what I was referring to only was not that Mitchell had talked to Pappas, but that Pappas never mentioned that here in this office. Never mentioned that, I know. All he said is that, "I'm helping, uh, helping, uh, uh, uh John's special projects," and I said, "Well, thank you very much. I appreciate it very much." He didn't tell me that it was about.

HALDEMAN: Okay.

PRESIDENT: So after that conversation . . .

HALDEMAN: Okay. Now that—See . . .

PRESIDENT: You see what I mean. (Unintelligible) . . .

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) all this stuff.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. But it's, again, you're a long ways from having to make this case. You need to know what John has; but, uh, that was, that, that Pappas thing was so, you know, just, just—your "I know" was almost lost in the thing, he, he was going on, you injected, "I know." He had to be damn alert to have remembered that and put it down.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: And you gotta assume that maybe he was, but, but the odds are very much against it.

PRESIDENT: Well, that's what they were.

HALDEMAN: Unless he's got a tape or something else. But I just don't—tape. I do not accept that as even a remote possibility.

PRESIDENT: I just can't believe that anybody, that even John Dean, would come into this office with a tape recorder.

HALDEMAN: And I think if he did, that's one more discrediting thing on him. I mean you just make the point that that's inconceivable, that a man . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . tape recorder, puts that out in the press.

HALDEMAN: But then that indicates he was coming in to try to trap the President. So what was his motive, what

were your motives, what were the Justice Department's motives and prosecutors' motives at that point? They didn't know there was, that—you look at the things in the context of the times. There was no—at that point, there wasn't any real feeling that there was a cover-up thing, that's come out. That's just (unintelligible) out of Dean's thing, Dean report.

PRESIDENT: Well, I think there had been hush money talk John, Bob.

HALDEMAN: It was a story, there was a hush money story and James McCord . . .

PRESIDENT: McCord, McCord, remember, said, "Hush money," didn't he . . . ?

HALDEMAN: I'm not sure when. Somewhere in there he did . . .

PRESIDENT: Before March. But, uh, there was a hush money story.

HALDEMAN: I don't know.

PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah, sure. Well anyway it doesn't make any differ . . . that's, uh, that's what it is. But, uh, he

was practically saying that Hunt's, uh, —he said, "Look, Hunt needs money here. Bittman has said that. Hutn's got to get money here or he'll blow all the seamy help—the seamy side." Wasn't that the story, this is (unintelligible) . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, you've got to do some (intelligible). I don't remember. I don't, God damn it, until this day remember what hap—, I don't really remember, do you? Whether you were told after that, well—look for Christ sakes get this money.

HALDEMAN: No, I don't think so.

PRESIDENT: You don't think so?

HALDEMAN: No.

PRESIDENT: 'Cause (unintelligible) remembered that much, Bob.

HALDEMAN: And if I were, I said that we can't.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: And I know we didn't.

PRESIDENT: But I would say we'll do what you can do to help Mitchell but — I might of said to him get this, this to Mitchell.

HALDEMAN: Nope.

PRESIDENT: Get this message to Mitchell.

HALDEMAN: No, I don't even think that. I'll—you might be right, 'cause you've been right on the rest of it and pretty accurately, but I sure don't remember that.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) I remember as much as had thought about (unintelligible) I, I, we've got to keep the cork in the bottle and so forth. Well, even looking at all of that, looking at it, at its worst and, let's face it the—it was not something that he just came in and said first reaction (unintelligible) of the White House (unintelligible) there's a cancer and he says well, it's growing daily and so forth and is on. He says there is the lem, for example, of the pay-offs (unintelligible) recount the payments and I'd say why is that. He says well, for an example, uh,—he's got Kalmbach in this memorandum, hasn't he. The call was made to Kalmbach and then Kalmbach raised the money. Got a little on Pappas but that's almost coincidental, isn't it? It's almost incidentally. It's . . .

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell—Pappas is helping Mitchell, didn't he say?

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: I don't think we can . . .

PRESIDENT: I said, I don't want that. Now wait—go ahead (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Well, I was gonna say I don't think that we can pretend that, that we didn't know there was, was an interest on Mitchell's part in rais-

ing money for the defendants.

PRESIDENT: 'S right. Well, I . . .

HALDEMAN: But I sure as hell don't know what it was for.

PRESIDENT: I, I,—wait a minute. Start . . .

HALDEMAN: I mean, you didn't know about it, I gave you (unintelligible) . . .

PRESIDENT: I know that. (Unintelligible) went through this. I really didn't.

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I didn't know, you know, I mean I didn't. I deliberately got the staff protected me from it for their credit and I just wasn't getting involved.

HALDEMAN: It wasn't even a matter of protection. It was, it was not something that was necessary to, to get you.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: It didn't involve you.

PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right.

HALDEMAN: It wasn't (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Then, then he did (unintelligible) Bittman is talking to O'Brien and so forth and so on. I said, well, my God, there's about \$1,000 sitting beside a road and so forth. Do we go into what the seamy side was at all? The conversation didn't go on too much?

HALDEMAN: No, not really.

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Excerpts of transcript of a recording of a meeting among the President, H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, on April

(Nixon and Haldeman are discussing the March 21, 1973 meeting attended by

Dean, Haldeman has just finished listening to the tape of that meeting.)

HALDEMAN: . . . I don't know, I don't know, I think that he wanted to set up this meeting with, uh, he wanted Dean to meet with Mitchell and Ehrlichman and Bob, you know. He went through it. Then Dean said, "You were, you know, faced now with the fact that the U. S. Attorney's gonna pull all the defendants back and immunize them, and, uh, send them back to the Grand, Grand Jury." And, uh, he said, "That won't do any good 'cause they'll stone-wall. Except for Hunt and that's not proper handling." And the Pres, you said, "That's why the, the immediate thing you've got no choice (unintelligible). But that you deal with the one point, is that right?" Dean said, "That's right." You said, "if, if," you said, "Would you agree that if that will buy time we'd better well, better damn well get that done." Dean said, "I think he ought to be given some signal anyway." You said, "For Christ sake give him a way down. Turn it off." You said, "Who's gonna talk to him? I guess Colson. He's the one." Dean said, "Well Colson doesn't have any money, that's the thing. One of the real problems is they haven't been able to raise money. A million dollars in cash is a very difficult problem, as we discussed before." He said, "Mitchell has talked to Pappas. I called him last night. John asked me to call him last night after our discussion and after you'd met with John to see where that was."

PRESIDENT: John Ehrlichman?

HALDEMAN: I guess. And I said, "Have you talked with Pappas?" This was all in code because Martha Mitchell picked up the phone. And, uh, so I said, "Did you talk to the Greek." He said, "Yes I have." And I said, "Is the Greek bearing gifts." And he said, "Well, I'm gonna call you tomorrow on that."

PRESIDENT: Who's this?

HALDEMAN: Dean to Mitchell.

See TRANSCRIPT, A15, Col. 1

TRANSCRIPT, From A14

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Dean says, "Did you talk to the Greek." Mitchell said, "Yes I have." Dean says, "Is the Greek bearing gifts." Mitchell said, "Well, I'm gonna call you tomorrow on that."

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: You said then, "Well look, what is it you need on that?" Dean said, "It sounds easy, but that's where our breakdown is, that it's easy to do." You said, "Well if you had it out would you get it to somebody." Dean said, "Well LaRue leaves it in mail boxes, and then someone phones Hunt.

They're a bunch of amateur in that business." And I say, "That was the thing we thought Mitchell ought to be able to do is to find some way to do that sort of thing. None of us know how to."

PRESIDENT: That's really first time I really ever knew who handled money or what, or anything. I had read, I shouldn't act dumb, I had read that Mrs. Hunt, that these Cubans got money in bags in (unintelligible). I also read, however, that there was a Cuban Committee, that's how that thing came in there. And, uh, the Pappas thing, the Pappas thing was there but on that—my conversation on Pappas is pretty—I think, uh, . . .

HALDEMAN: Well, and Pappas was the number one of a number of major contributors that we met with. That's right.

PRESIDENT: No, no that's right. And I say, "Yes, I know about Pappas (unintelligible) Pappas and I didn't discuss this, believe me."

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) just knew that Pappas was (unintelligible) and helping with the campaigning.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Well, but Pappas was, said he was helping on, uh, . . .

HALDEMAN: Helping Mitchell?

PRESIDENT: Helping Mitchell on certain things and I said, "Well, that's fine, thank you." But I, he didn't tell me what it was.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I think it's a matter of fact though that somebody said be sure to talk to Pappas because he's being very helpful on the, uh, Watergate thing. Uh, (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: I don't think I said Watergate thing. I said, I said Mitchell wants you to be sure and talk to Pappas. He's very helpful.

PRESIDENT: Very helpful.

HALDEMAN: Well, I may have said helpful in raising money for the prison, for the defense. You see I, I . . .

PRESIDENT: Did you go over that point with your lawyer today, that point that the defendants . . .

HALDEMAN: Yeah, some. They're, they're . . .

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). huh.

HALDEMAN: . . . still organizing.

HALDEMAN: That's something, incidental, but it's still a mystery to me. I don't—why we care if the Cubans talk. Unless it's about the National security stuff about the other jobs we did.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Because . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, that's what, quite a dif—, conversation differs, because it is foul. It was about the operation.

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible) . . .

PRESIDENT: Things that we did and that's why we discussed it awhile.

HALDEMAN: . . . had to do with that we did at—not—had to do with that he did at the White House

though, not what he did in, in, in . . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: . . . in, in this case.

PRESIDENT: That's right, not obstruction of justice.

HALDEMAN: No 'cause if it was obstruction of justice, it was obstruction of justice on a charge not yet led, which is not obstruction of justice. The charge that he had burlarized the Ellsberg.

PRESIDENT: But even then, we don't (unintelligible). Dean says, Well, I called Pappas and I told him about your other trump card." He naturally (unintelligible) lawyers all do obviously. Called, uh, Pappas.

HALDEMAN: Well, the other thing that your dealing with the facts are. You're looking at . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: . . . actual things that were said. Dean will be dealing with how he wants to construe those facts and that may not come out exactly the same way. And Dean may be telling his lawyers and may be thinking in his own mind a lot worse than what really happened. What do you think the President instructed him to do in this sort of thing (unintelligible). He said we have to (unintelligible) out, in this sort of thing which is (unintelligible), he didn't. We've just explored segments and we get to the thing somewhere.

PRESIDENT: Where, where he edged this to you?

HALDEMAN: Where he puts it to . . . I think then we may have to pull out this tape recording, and let 'em hear it. Somebody like the Chief Justice or somebody, you know. Just, . . .

PRESIDENT: It's better if you can give your recollection now, that's the important part. And then afterward, afterwards Ehrlichman said "We will do, there's no dice (unintelligible)." Right on that?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I guess.

~

Transcript of a June 20, 1972, meeting between then-President Nixon and special counsel, Charles W. Colson:

COLSON: Sir.

PRESIDENT: Hi. Now I hope everybody is not going to get in a tizzy about the, uh, Democratic Committee.

COLSON: A little, uh, it's a little irritating, disheartening, I guess, is a right word.

PRESIDENT: Well.

COLSON: Pick up that God damn Washington Post and see that guilt association.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. (Unintelligible)

COLSON: Yeah, I, this is the (un-

intelligible) in three months. Been off our payroll for three months.

PRESIDENT: No, don't worry about your personal expense and pension problems.

COLSON: No, I've learned a lesson from you in that regard. I must say that . . .

PRESIDENT: Can't rule out the fact, it happened. Oh, well—

COLSON: (Unintelligible) family—they knew us (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Really?

COLSON: Sickening, you know. They say, "Were you involved in this thing?"

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

(Unintelligible.)

COLSON: Do they think I'm that dumb?

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible.)

COLSON: (Unintelligible) quite that way.

PRESIDENT: Well, don't worry about that.

COLSON: Well, I don't think it's—it's even less than IT&T. It's the kind of thing that no one in the country . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well now (unintelligible) . . .

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: A lot of people think you oughta wiretap.

COLSON: Well, they, I'm, I'm sure most people . . .

PRESIDENT: Knew why the hell we're doing it, and they probably figure they're doing it to us, which they are.

COLSON: Most people figure that, uh, political parties spy on each other and that's part of the problem. (Unintelligible) spying. I . . .

PRESIDENT: That's why, uh, that's why, uh, they hired this guy in the first place to sweep the rooms, didn't they?

COLSON: Yes sir. Frankly, sir, I haven't got into the, uh, ultimate details that we want to on this. But I assume he was hired to protect their own offices.

PRESIDENT: Well, they better, better have somebody you know, the, uh, uh, Bob gave them 340 on the chopper. (Unintelligible). The chopper had some guy with McGovern, aides that they have are—they hope the committee bugged—I just had Bob pick it up.

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) good story.

COLSON: (Unintelligible) they've, they've known most of our leads (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Was he the guy that bugged the U.S. — (Unintelligible). You've got a God damn person over there that's ratting on us. What do you think?

COLSON: I think it's undoubtedly O'Brien's group.

PRESIDENT: Do you?

COLSON: You never know.

PRESIDENT: You say who . . . I don't know who the hell it would be. Some disgruntled (unintelligible) or somebody planted it.

COLSON: Or it could be his secretary.

PRESIDENT: Well, secretaries do it, not that you pay them any (unintelligible).

COLSON: Sure. There, there's no way you can guard against this kind of thing. The only thing you can do is be . . .

PRESIDENT: Be sure the White House has told, you know . . .

COLSON: Well, I think—oh, sure, I mean, that's the kind of thing (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: At least the ones we're going to investigate are. (Unintelligible).

COLSON: Oh yeah (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I mean like, ah, the ones we have over there according to (unintelligible) and uh, the Yates girl, Buz Yates, Yates (unintelligible) both worked for Johnson. That's sort of a key that, us—oh, hell, uh . . .

COLSON: Those, those kind of people; I think you can tell a person from the way . . .

PRESIDENT: I, I think so. They don't look that—well . . .

COLSON: Yeah. I don't quite know if—might be able to do it long enough to (unintelligible). (Tape noise) that's the kind of thing you can never be sure of.

PRESIDENT: On this thing here, I, uh, I've got to, well, it's a dangerous job.

COLSON: Well, Bob is pulling it all together—thus far, I think we've done this, I think, I think we've done the right things to date.

PRESIDENT: I think the real question is whether, uh, we want to (unintelligible) the charge—(tape noise) (unintelligible) to hold up. Basically,

they all pretty hard line guys.

COLSON: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: If we are going to have this funny guy take credit for that—

COLSON: You mean the one with the—Hunt?

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: Course I, I can't believe he's involved. I think (unintelligible) he's, he's, he's too smart to do it this way, he's just too damned shrewd (unintelligible) too much sophisticated techniques. You don't have to get into (unintelligible with tape noise) heavy equipment like that, put it in the ceiling, hell of a lot easier way.

PRESIDENT: It doesn't sound like a, a skillful job. (Unintelligible). If we didn't know better, would have thought it was deliberately butchered.

COLSON: Yeah, uh, I thought of that this weekend. And, uh, then I, then I figured, uh, maybe it's the Cubans that did it. Organizing it on their own, because you know they had, uh (unintelligible). (Coughs)

PRESIDENT: I just, feel very strongly.

COLSON: Oh, Jesus. I just talked to Clawson. He said you know we should (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I saw a paper when I was in there—it says, Kennedy, uh, public enemy number one for Cubans (unintelligible).

COLSON: Oh, they're violent. Well you know, Mr. President, most of them keep (unintelligible) . . .

PRESIDENT: I'm anxious to get that, why don't you get that paper of, ah, Rebozo had it on his, uh, desk. It's the last published, the last issue,

I think to the paper. Published, had to be published (unintelligible) public enemy number one.

COLSON: They hate him, of course they hate McGovern because they're not used to Kennedy (unintelligible). You know, if we were to recognize Castro and he was the man who returned the Cuban nationals. A lot of these guys who were, who were, would be considered fugitives from Cuba—they don't know where to get political asylum.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: That's right.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) these days . . . Jesus Christ.

COLSON: Well.

PRESIDENT: We pay a price. McGovern would do it in a minute.

COLSON: You, he, put yourself in their shoes, when you think that, uh, that they're sitting here thinking—God, that's not what (unintelligible). He may be taken back to a firing squad in Havana. (Unintelligible) resort to some further (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Or The Post, obviously, would be in a hell of a fight on that, and it will rub off on some others. I cannot believe that the press is as vicious as it is. Be able to make this an issue, that's uh—Stay relaxed, you know what I mean (unintelligible).

COLSON: The Post story is the front page in Boston this morning, in the Boston Globe. They've got some (unintelligible) large pictures so I called a few people up here this morning, and nobody's seen it. And those who had seen it said, "Look, (unintelligible)." I, I don't think people pay attention.

PRESIDENT: I read the story. (Unintelligible). But, uh, of course I (unintelligible). What the hell does it prove? That he had—somebody had your number in a book, so that's, what the hell does that prove? But . . . (unintelligible). Probably had mine.



H. R. HALDEMAN

"Where's the line drawn between a legitimate effort to provide legal fees and an illegitimate effort to buy off defendants . . ."

"I don't think that we can pretend that, that we didn't know there was, was an interest on John Mitchell's part in raising money for the defendants."

"That was the thing we thought Mitchell ought to be able to do is to find some way to do that sort of thing. None of us know how to."

—H. R. Haldeman to President Nixon on April 26

COLSON: They had Howard Hunt's number, not mine. (Unintelligible) telephone . . .

PRESIDENT: That's right, but Hunt was, uh . . .

COLSON: But you read that story in the paper and you think they had mine. Now, that was a brilliantly written piece of, uh, political knavery because the first time you read it you think they had my number and then you read it again and it's Howard Hunt's.

PRESIDENT: Know about Howard Hunt's, but how did we get in there?

COLSON: Well, Howard Hunt was here as a consultant and I wrote an (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Oh yeah. Well, I said to him I don't suppose any lawyer from (unintelligible) the guy will get a Pulitzer prize for this . . .

COLSON: Probably.

PRESIDENT: (Laughs). No, no, no, you know what I mean, the guy that broke in . . .

COLSON: Oh, oh.

PRESIDENT: . . . for Christ sakes, they gave the Times the Pulitzer prize.

COLSON: They gave Anderson a Pulitzer prize. In other words, stealing documents (unintelligible) for (intelligible).

PRESIDENT: Belonging to the Government, top secret, shit, uh, who, did,

did any of these people squeal about that then's

COLSON: Yeah, isn't that true.

PRESIDENT: That's my point. Did McGovern, did The Times, did The Post squeal about that then? Now here was an attempted theft that failed, against a political party, not against the government of the United States. They give Pulitzer prizes for publishing stolen documents. Now let's get at a, I think a hell of a tough speech. (Unintelligible). An article, I mean, let a, a . . .

COLSON: . . . that's right, if, if you steal classified government documents and print them in a newspaper

you get a Pulitzer prize.

PRESIDENT: Right. And don't . . .

COLSON: (Unintelligible) political party headquarters, uh, you get pilloried.

PRESIDENT: That's great, great. Well, and then, too of course, we are just going to leave this where it is, with the Cubans. I hired a detective as being, happens to be the most (unintelligible). Now—

COLSON: I think that's (unintelligible) when he was younger. (Unintelligible) the picture said he's good. The fact that they had Hunt's name was the most logical thing in the world because he ran and trained the chief of brigade that went to the Bay of Pigs. He's the fellow that came up and, and cried at John Kennedy's office to win such and such a waiver.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: Bill Buckley is his children's godfather. He's a very hard, right hard running guy.

PRESIDENT: Buckley's the kind to write the story.

COLSON: Buckley's the guy who just (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I hope to Christ that he's got (unintelligible) they get Hunt for trying? (Unintelligible) double standard (tape noise). (Unintelligible) I'm not gonna worry about it. I've (unintelligible) sh—, the hell with it. Well, let me say it flatly—we're not going to reach to it that way. We're gonna, we've worked hard on that (unintelligible). What else could we overlook?

COLSON: They'll feel sure (unintelligible). No basis for that. O'Brien—, O'Brien has sued for invasion of privacy. That's that's, that's libel in my book. That's libel. That isn't—

PRESIDENT: When will that get up?

COLSON: Well, they, they brought the suit today, it was announced they were bringing the suit today that the attorneys. I don't think that . . . be dismissed for lack of a (unintelligible) But the, the, uh, you know, it's a great Washington story, because Washington just thrives on intrigue, and spies and suspense.

PRESIDENT: Well, as you know,

COLSON: . . . the political (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Where in the hell (unintelligible), where the hell are all these leaks from our side coming from? Now let's put that aside for (unintelligible) Jesus Christ we've got our place replace. You know damn well, there, you're, you're either bugged or disloyal or thievery are common par for the course. You don't have to deal in proving a bugging count.

COLSON: (Cough) I think they'll have to guard against, Mr. President, is the idea of (unintelligible) on ITT mistake. Now, we were riding so damned high and I guess we couldn't do much about it but they dragged us into it, but—the press, the media and the Democrats are so God damn desperate that any issue that they can lay their hands on—that it's something which normally wouldn't amount to that much. They're just going to blow their cool out because they haven't got any other place they can lay a glove on us. And that was the case with ITT, which came after China, the economy was picking up, wage-price controls were working, they had nothing so they went into ITT viciously.

PRESIDENT: Sure: (Unintelligible).

COLSON: I think they'll try to. You can't make a case out of this the way you could out of ITT. The weakness in ITT was that it fed the public suspicion that the Republicans are dedicated to big business.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know, it's \$400,000 and all that and so forth. But here it is, they're just trying, let the committee try to find out what the others are doing (unintelligible).

COLSON: I think people expect it. I really do. I think they expect it. The trouble is . . .

PRESIDENT: Mistake would be what? (Unintelligible).

COLSON: Mistake would be to get all of them zeroed in on it.

PRESIDENT: Oh.

COLSON: Make a big case out of it.

PRESIDENT: Oh shit. (Unintelligible) I couldn't agree more.

COLSON: Go after it day in and day out.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: Follow the every—uh, I'd say the hell with it, believe me.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, gotta—, and keep your people all away from it. (Unintelligible) like this and I cop out. (Unintelligible).

COLSON: This is good. This is a (unintelligible). This gets into the media in a way that they would have accepted . . .

PRESIDENT: That's right. It couldn't be very hard.

COLSON: Sure these fellas are just in there trying to win the Pulitzer prize. He's going at this pretty well—it's going to be a darned effective speech. Apparently was on a TV program out in California, statewide program. And, uh, (tape noise) Ellsberg, he didn't know he was having it on Ellsberg, and they asked him to comment on Ellsberg today on Ellsberg today and come here today prepared to discuss the wholesale price of (unintelligible) (laughs and coughs). And I gave a very good speech and said, "Look, I, that the President is monitoring it himself (unintelligible). Actually, Mr. President, in this area we've been making, I think, some pretty good progress with the media. It's (unintelligible with tape noise). Now, well it has taken hold really. And the interesting thing is that the press office, every week, come around asking questions about who's money we are (unintelligible) the media this week.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: It shows they're ner-, I'd say it shows they are nervous about it. They're, they're . . .

PRESIDENT: Here we have meetings and so forth and so on. So they'll know better next time.

COLSON: We, we too, but . . . (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: That's right. (Unintelligible). I'm not saying about it.

COLSON: You know, I, I picked up just earlier this,—I guess it was yesterday—run down of oral (unintelligible) and published them around the country as a result of Ken Clawson's attack on the New York Times. And it's really, ah, it's ah, fascinating, uh study, the Dallas Editorial . . .

PRESIDENT: Great.

COLSON: . . . the Detroit News, the, it's run all over the country, little syndicates picked it up, uh, media critics picked it up, Newsday featured it. He caught them on that one. He really—and this, really hurt them. They're still stinging over that Anthony Lewis story on Vietnam.

PRESIDENT: They're still writing that same lousy line, but they're stinging about the story. You're right.

COLSON: And they're also stinging now about that impeachment ad in The New York Times.

PRESIDENT: Are they?

COLSON: I don't know whether you've noticed it but, but that Common Cause (unintelligible) up against, uh, against The New York Times and the sponsors of the impeachment ad.

PRESIDENT: On what grounds? Common Cause.

COLSON: Yes sir.

PRESIDENT: Why?

COLSON: Because they, this is their chance to prove that they're (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Fair?

COLSON: Fair.

PRESIDENT: On what a, what ground?

COLSON: Well, The Times violated the new, the new campaign spending (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: How did it violate it?

COLSON: Because they didn't, they didn't require the political disclaimer which, uh, says that this ad is, was paid for or not paid for on behalf of . . .

PRESIDENT: My guess is The Times would be pretty—

COLSON: No, no, they'd have, they'd have to, to charge them for it.

PRESIDENT: What look, well, you know what I mean.

COLSON: Oh yeah, yeah.

PRESIDENT: That's what they believe.

COLSON: If that comes out, uh, we'll, we'll have a case against The New York Times on that quick. The GAO is now investigating The Times on that . . . Would be a lovely twist . . .

PRESIDENT: The GAO is . . .

COLSON: . . . basically . . .

PRESIDENT: Because of this?

COLSON: . . . because of a violation of the campaign spending section.

Yeah, they're on, The Times is on very weak ground, I think . . .

PRESIDENT: What're they arguing? They just, they just—oversight . . . ?

COLSON: No, they're gonna argue that it wasn't a political ad, yet right in the body of the ad was a request for funds for candidates who would vote to impeach you as President. So, they, they don't have much of a defense. Then they'll have to disclose who paid for the ad. And if it turns out that that may be traced back to McGovern people, you, you can make this bugging incident look puny by comparison, because that ad was placed the day you left the Soviet Union. And here you are coming back from negotiating with a, one of the most important critically important meetings in modern history and they're placing an ad to impeach the President of the United States. If that can be traced back to McGovern, I think it would, make, uh eavesdropping at the Watergate Hotel look like child's play.

PRESIDENT: At times, uh, I just—stonewall it, they're not gonna . . .

COLSON: Well they haven't, they haven't yet been, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)

COLSON: They've just been served now, with the, uh, hte request for information so they will have to start answering. The Boston Globe, you know, refused to run that same ad. Oh, that shows you how far out The Times is, Jesus (tape noise). The Times and The Post (unintelligible) they're not supposed to do it. That's different.

PRESIDENT: Is anybody over at the committee—good intentions I'm sure. All that work, gets up on (unintelligible)—McGovern crowd I sup-

pose.

COLSON: It's gonna be a lot of bitterness coming out of the McGovern crowd before it's over. I don't think we have to go looking for it. (unintelligible) (tape distortion) he, he really does, a lot of people (unintelligible) that are frightened to death that he could get elected.

PRESIDENT: I noticed in reading the news summary today, I, uh (unintelligible) some of these god-damned politics are gettin' a little worried.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I don't know. I, uh (unintelligible)

COLSON: It's a, it's a . . .

PRESIDENT: I mean they're worried because they hate my guts so that so. That, that they're worried . . .

Second Excerpt

COLSON: Keep the (unintelligible)
up on our troops, Mr. President.

up on our troops, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Oh sure, and as I said, my goodness, . . .

COLSON: We won't let this one bug us, uh,

PRESIDENT: Dumbest thing. My God, there are going to be all sorts of things in the campaign. (15-second unintelligible). We can't let this (unintelligible) world's coming to an end.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible). This is a development. Nothing loses an election. Nothing changes it that much. (unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Sure. (Unintelligible).

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) washes away (unintelligible). And you look at this damn thing now and its gonna be forgotten after awhile.

COLSON: This'll be forgotten and I hope a lot faster than ITT.

PRESIDENT: Oh sure, you know the hell is going to keep it alive. We're gonna have a court case and indeed, the difficulty we'll have ahead, we have got to have lawyers smart enough to have our people de-, delay (unintelligible) avoiding — depositions, of course, uh, are one possibility. We've got—I think it would be a quite the thing for the judge to call in Mitchell and have a deposition in the middle of the campaign, don't you?

COLSON: I do. I don't think he would. Of course, I'd love to have a deposition. I love to have a deposition taken around here. I'm not—, because nobody, everybody's completely out of it.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know.

COLSON: But—this is, this is once when you'd like for people to testify. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I don't think you should (unintelligible) . . .

COLSON: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: . . . you're an inside man.

COLSON: I shouldn't. I'd love to, but . . .

PRESIDENT: I'd just stay out of it, uh, all there is to it.

COLSON: (Unintelligible). I want (unintelligible).

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) could kill him. But I just think, ya know, sometimes the uh, you may have your chance later on. (Unintelligible) how we (tape distortion). The press (unintelligible) they know goddamn well. (Unintelligible). Well, go right out and answer these questions for now (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: "Well Ron, isn't this a terrible thing." Shit.

COLSON: You know, Mr. President (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: I, I tell ya, I didn't have that much to (unintelligible).

COLSON: The greatest lesson, uh, those of us around you learn from you. I just, I, I wonder how in other presidencies (unintelligible) the guts to stay with it. Because it gets to your morale, personally. (Unintelligible) it does.

PRESIDENT: Ya.

COLSON: And after it does — I put up with it a dozen times in the last three years. Every time I do I stop and think "My God, look at what the President has gone through . . ."

PRESIDENT: Well . . .

COLSON: . . . over the years.

PRESIDENT: One thing I do