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RECORDING OF THE
MEETING BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT AND
MESSRS. DEAN AND
HALDEMAN ON
MARCH 21, 1973 FROM
10:12 TO 11:55 A.M.

(REEL #1 OF 3)

ITEM 5.1

SONY CORP.
TOKYO JAPAN

NOTICE: Buyers shall determine that contents are proper
kind for intended use. If defective in the manufacture,
labeling, or packaging, contents will be replaced. There
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RECORDING OF THE
MEETING BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND MESSRS.
DEAN AND HALDEMAN ON
MARCH 21, 1973, FROM
10:12 TO 11:55 A.M.

(REEL #2 OF 3)

ITEM 5.1

SONY CORP.
TOKYO JAPAN

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RECORDING OF THE
MEETING BETWEEN
THE PRESIDENT AND
MESSRS. DEAN AND
HALDEMAN ON
MARCH 21, 1973 FROM
10:12 TO 11:55 AM

(REEL #3 OF 3)

ITEM 5.1

SONY CORP.
TOKYO JAPAN

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TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE
WATERGATE SPECIAL PROSECUTION
FORCE OF THE RECORDING OF THE
MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND MESSRS. DEAN AND HALDEMAN
OF MARCH 21, 1973, FROM 10:12
to 11:55 A.M.

PRESIDENT: Well, sit down, sit down.

DEAN: Good morning.

PRESIDENT: Well what is the, uh, Dean summary of the day about?

DEAN: John caught me on the way out and asked me about why Gray was holding back on information, if that was under instructions from us. And it, uh, it was and it wasn't. Uh, it was instructions proposed by the Attorney General, consistent with your press conference statement that no further raw data was to be turned over to the . . .

PRESIDENT: full committee.

DEAN: full committee.

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: And that was the extent of it. And Gray, himself, is the one who reached the conclusion that no more information be turned over, he's turned over enough. Uh, so this is again Pat Gray making decisions on his own as to how to handle his hearings. He has been totally unwilling all along to take any guidance, any instruction. We don't know what he is going to do. He is not going to talk about it. He won't review it, uh, and I don't think he does it to harm you in any way, sir.

PRESIDENT: No, he is just quite stubborn. And, he's quite stubborn, and also he isn't very smart. You know he and I . . .

DEAN: He's bullheaded.

PRESIDENT: He is smart in his own way, but . . .

DEAN: Yeah

PRESIDENT: He's got that typical well by God this is right and I am going to do it.

DEAN: That's why he thinks he'll be confirmed, because he thinks he's being, he's being his own man. He's being forthright, honest. He feels he's turned over too much and so it is conscious decision that he is harming the Bureau by doing this and so he's not going to. . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] . . . that this is because the White House told him to do this, that and the other thing. And also, as I told Ehrlichman, I don't see why our little boys can't make something out of the fact that, God; [inaudible] This is, this is the only responsible position that could possibly . . . The FBI cannot turn over raw files. Has anybody made that point? I have tried to . . .

DEAN: Sam Ervin has made that point himself. In fact, in reading the transcript of Gray's hearings, Ervin tried to hold Gray back from doing what he was doing at the time he did it. Uh, but it was very unwise. I don't think that anyone is criticizing your position on it.

PRESIDENT: Well, let's make the point, let's make the point that raw files cannot be turned over. Well I think that point should be made. . .

DEAN: That, that

PRESIDENT: that we are standing for the rights of innocent individuals. The American Civil Liberties Union is against it. We're against it. [inaudible] tradition, and it will continue to be the tradition. All files

are confidential to the holders. [inaudible] . . .
inspired to put that out. We just ought to do it and
let them see what is in one.

DEAN: How damaging?

PRESIDENT: Any further word on, on Sullivan? Is he still . . .

DEAN: Yes, he is going to be over to see me today, this
morning, hopefully, sometime. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: As soon as you get that, I will be available to talk
to you this afternoon.

DEAN: Alright, sir.

PRESIDENT: I will be busy until about one o'clock. After that,
anytime you are through I would like to see what it
is he has. He's really got something but, I would
like to see what it is.

DEAN: Uh, the reason that I thought we ought to talk this
morning is because in, in our conversations, uh, I
have, I have the impression that you don't know
everything I know . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: and it makes it very difficult for you to make judg-
ments that eh, that only you can make . . .

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: on some of these things and I thought that --

PRESIDENT: In other words, I've got to know why you feel that
uh, [inaudible] something . . .

DEAN: Well, let me . . .

PRESIDENT: that we shouldn't unravel something?

DEAN: Let, let me give you my overall first.

PRESIDENT: In other words, your, your judgment as to where it
stands, and where we will go.

DEAN: I think, I think that, uh, there's no doubt about the
seriousness of the problem we're, we've got. We have a
cancer within, close to the Presidency, that's growing.

It's growing daily. It's compounding, it grows geometrically now, because it compounds itself. Uh, that will be clear as I explain, you know, some of the details, uh, of why it is, and basically, it is because (1) we are being blackmailed; (2) uh, people are going to start perjuring themselves very quickly, that have not had to perjure themselves, to protect other people and the like. And that is just, and there is no assurance --

PRESIDENT: That that won't bust?

DEAN: That that won't bust.

PRESIDENT: True.

DEAN: So let me give you the sort of basic facts, talking first about the Watergate; and then about Segretti; and then about some of the peripheral items that eh, have come up. First of all on the, on the Watergate: how did it all start, where did it start? It started with an instruction to me from Bob Haldeman to see if we couldn't set up a perfectly legitimate campaign intelligence operation over at the Re-Election Committee. Not being in this business, I turned to somebody who had been in this business, Jack Caulfield, who is, I don't know if you remember Jack or not, he was your original bodyguard before they had candidate, candidate protection, an old New York City policeman.

PRESIDENT: Right, I know him, I know him.

DEAN: Uh, Jack had worked for John and then was transferred to my office. I said: "Jack, come up with a plan that, you know -- a normal infiltration, I mean, you know -- buying information from secretaries and all that sort of thing." He did, he put together a plan. It was

kicked around, and I went to Ehrlichman with it. I went to Mitchell with it, and the consensus was that Caulfield wasn't the man to do this. In retrospect, that might have been a bad call, because he is an incredibly cautious person and, and wouldn't have put the situation where it is today. All right after rejecting that, they said we still need something; so I was told to look around for somebody who could go over to 1701 and do this. That is when I came up with Gordon Liddy, who -- they needed a lawyer. Gordon had an intelligence background from his FBI service. I was aware of the fact that he had done some extremely sensitive things for the White House while he had been at the White House, and he had apparently done them well. Uh, going out into Ellsberg's doctors's office --

PRESIDENT: Oh, yeah.

DEAN: And things like this. He worked with leaks. He, you know, tracked these things down. Uh, and so the report that I got from Krogh was that he was a hell of a good man and, and not only that, a good lawyer, uh, and could set up a proper operation. So we talked to Liddy. Liddy was interested in doing it. I took, uh, Liddy over to meet Mitchell. Mitchell thought highly of him because apparently Mitchell was partly involved in his coming to the White House to work for, for Krogh. Uh, Liddy had been at Treasury before that. Then Liddy was told to put together his plan, you know, how he would run an intelligence operation. Uh, this was after he was hired over there at the, uh, Committee. Magruder called me in January and said, "I would like

to have you come over and see Liddy's plan" . . .

PRESIDENT: January of '72?

DEAN: January of '72.

DEAN: "You come over to Mitchell's office and sit in on a meeting where Liddy is going to lay his plan out." I said, "Well I don't really know as I am the man, but if you want me there I will be happy to." [clears throat] So I came over and Liddy laid out a million dollar plan that was the most incredible thing I have ever laid my eyes on: all in codes, and involved black bag operations, kidnapping, providing prostitutes, eh, to weaken the opposition, bugging, eh, mugging teams. It was just an incredible thing.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: No, not really.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: No, no, not at all, Mitchell, Mitchell just virtually sat there puffing and laughing. I could tell because after he, after Liddy left the office I said that is the most incredible thing I have ever seen. He said I agree. And so he was told to go back to the drawingboard and come up with something realistic. So there was a second meeting. Uh, they asked me to come over to that. I came into the tail end of the meeting. I wasn't there for the first part. I don't know how long the meeting lasted. Uh, at this point, they were discussing again bugging, kidnapping and the like. And at this point I said, right in front of everybody, very clearly, I said, "These are not the sort of things (1) that are ever to be discussed in the office of the Attorney General of the United

States" -- where he still was -- "and I am personally incensed." I was trying to get Mitchell off the hook, uh, cause . . .

PRESIDENT: I understand.

DEAN: he's, he's a nice person, doesn't like to have to say no under, when. . . people he is going to have to work with.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: So I let, I let it be known. I said, "You all pack that stuff up and get it the hell out of here, cause we just, you just can't talk this way in this office and you shouldn't, you should re-examine your whole thinking." He came back . . .

PRESIDENT: Who all was present to be precise?

DEAN: It was Magruder, Magruder.

PRESIDENT: Magruder?

DEAN: Uh, Mitchell, Liddy and myself. I came back right after the meeting and told Bob, I said, "Bob, we've got a growing disaster on our hands if they're thinking this way," and I said, "The White House has got to stay out of this and I, frankly, am not going to be involved in it." He said, "I agree, John." And, I thought at that point the thing was turned off. That's the last I heard of it, when I thought it was turned off, because it was an absurd proposal.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Liddy -- I did have dealings with him afterwards, we never talked about it. Now that would be hard to believe for some people, but, eh, we never did. That's just the fact of the matter.

PRESIDENT: Well, you were talking with him about other things.

DEAN: Other, we had so many other things.

PRESIDENT: He had some legal problems too.

DEAN: Now . . .

PRESIDENT: But you were his advisor, and I, I understand how you were [inaudible] . . . what campaign, what are the campaign laws, I know that because you had Haldeman over here [inaudible]. Go ahead.

DEAN: Now. So Liddy went back after that and was over, over at 1701, the Committee, and I, this is where I come into having put the pieces together after the fact, as to what I can put together what happened. Liddy sat over there and tried to come up with another plan that he could sell. (1) They were talking, saying that we would have to put too much money in. I don't think they were discounting the illegal points, at this -- after, you know. Jeb is not a lawyer. He didn't know whether this was the way the game was played or not and what it was all about. They came up with, apparently, with another plan, uh, but they couldn't get it approved by anybody over there. So, Liddy and Hunt apparently came to see Chuck Colson, and Chuck Colson picked up the telephone and called Magruder and said, "You all either fish or cut bait. Eh, this is absurd to have these guys over there and not using them. And if you are not going to use them, I may use them." Things of this nature.

PRESIDENT: When was this?

DEAN: This was apparently in February of '72.

PRESIDENT: That could be. Colson know what they were talking about?

DEAN: I can only assume, because of his close relationship with . . .

PRESIDENT: Hunt.

DEAN: Hunt, he had a damn good idea what they were talking about, a damn good idea. He would probably deny it, deny it today and probably get away with denying it. But I, I still --

PRESIDENT: What about . . .

DEAN: unless Hunt, uh, blows on him --

PRESIDENT: But then Hunt isn't enough. Takes two, doesn't it?

DEAN: Probably, probably, but Liddy was there also, and, if, if Liddy were to blow.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] I was thinking of the criminal liability though.

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: OK.

DEAN: I'll go back over that [inaudible] that's a soft spot for us and uh,

PRESIDENT: Colson . . . But Colson, uh, you think was the, uh, was the person who . . .

DEAN: I think he . . .

PRESIDENT: pushed

DEAN: I think he helped to get the push, get the thing off the dime. Now something else occurs, though . . .

PRESIDENT: Did Colson tell you he talked to anybody here?

DEAN: No, I think this was an independent . . .

PRESIDENT: Did he talk to Haldeman?

DEAN: No, I don't think so. Now but here's the other thing, where the next thing comes in the chain. I think that Bob was assuming that they had something that was proper over there, some intelligence gathering operation that Liddy was operating, and through Strachan, uh, who was his tickler, uh, he started pushing them to get something, to get some information. And they took that as a signal, Magruder took that as a signal,

to probably go to Mitchell and say, "they're pushing us like crazy for this from the White House," and so Mitchell probably puffed on his pipe and said, "Go ahead," and never really reflected on what it was all about. So, they had some plan that, obviously had, I gather, different targets they were going to go after. They were going to infiltrate, and bug, and do all this sort of thing to a lot of these targets Knowledge I have after the fact. And, apparently, they, they had, they had . . . after . . . they had initially broken in and bugged the Democratic National Committee; they were getting information; the information was coming over here, to Strachan, some of it was given to Haldeman. Uh, there's no doubt about it. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Did he know what it was coming [inaudible]

DEAN: I don't really know if he would, sir.

PRESIDENT: Not necessarily.

DEAN: Not necessarily, that's, not necessarily, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Strachan would have --

DEAN: Strachan knew it was from -- no doubt about it. And whether Strachan . . . I've never wanted to press these people on these points. . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: because it hurts them to, to give up that next inch. So I've had to piece things together. All right, so, Strachan was aware that . . . feeding information, reporting to Bob. At one point Bob even gave instructions to change their capabilities from Muskie to McGovern. And, it passed this back through Strachan to Magruder, and, and apparently to Liddy, and Liddy was starting to make arrangements to go in and bug the,

uh, uh, McGovern operation. They had done prelim. . .

PRESIDENT: They never had bugged Muskie, did they?

DEAN: No, they hadn't but they had, they had, uh, they had infiltrated it by uh -- uh, they had . . .

PRESIDENT: A secretary?

DEAN: a secretary and a chauffeur, nothing illegal about that. Now, so the information was coming over here and then, uh, I finally, after the next point in time when I became aware of anything, was on June 17th when I got the word that there'd been this break-in at the Democratic National Committee and somebody from the Committee had been caught, uh, from our Committee had been caught in the DNC. And I said, "Oh my God, that's" . . . uh . . . I could only, you know . . . essentially putting the pieces together . . .

PRESIDENT: You knew what it was.

DEAN: I knew what it was. So I called Liddy, uh, on that Monday morning, I said, "Gordon," I said, "First, I want to know if anybody in the White House was involved in this." He said, "No, they weren't." So I "I want to know how in God's name this happened." And he said, "Well, I was pushed without mercy by Magruder to get in there, get more information; if the information, it was not satisfactory, Magruder said the White House was not happy with what we were getting."

PRESIDENT: The White House?

DEAN: The White House, yeah. Uh,

PRESIDENT: Who do you think was pushing him?

DEAN: Well, I think it was probably Strachan thinking that Bob wanted things, and, because I have seen that happen on other occasions where things have been said to be of very prime importance when they really weren't.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] I am just trying to think as to what it is. We had just finished the Moscow trip. I mean we were --

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: The Democrats had just nominated McGovern. I mean, for Christ's sake, I mean, what the hell were these people doing? I mean, I can see your [inaudible] That's another thing. I can see the pressures, but I don't see why all the pressure would have been on then.

DEAN: I don't know, other than the fact that, uh, they might have been looking for information about the . . .

PRESIDENT: The conventions.

DEAN: the conventions.

PRESIDENT: Well, that's right.

DEAN: Because, I understand, also after the fact, that there was a plan to bug Larry O'Brien's suite down in Florida.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Uh, so, uh, Liddy told me that, uh, you know, that this is what had happened and, and this is why it had happened.

PRESIDENT: Liddy told you that he was planning -- Where did he learn of such a plan, from whom?

DEAN: Beg your pardon?

PRESIDENT: Where did he learn that there were plans to bug Larry O'Brien's suite?

DEAN: From Magruder, after the, long after the fact.

PRESIDENT: Oh Magruder [inaudible]

DEAN: Yeah. Magruder is totally knowledgeable on the whole thing.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Alright, now, we've gone through the trial. We've, I don't know if Mitchell has perjured himself in the grand jury or not.

PRESIDENT: Who?

DEAN: Mitchell. I don't know how much knowledge he actually had. I know that Magruder has perjured himself in the grand jury. I know that Porter has perjured himself, eh, in the grand jury.

PRESIDENT: Porter [inaudible]

DEAN: He's one of Magruder's deputies, uh, that they set up this scenario which they ran by me. They said, "How about it?" Well, I said, "I don't know. I, you know, if this is what you going to hang on, fine." Uh, but they . . .

PRESIDENT: What did they say before the grand jury?

DEAN: They said, they said, as they said before the trial and the grand jury that, that, uh, Liddy had come over as, as counsel and they knew he had these capacities to, you know, to do legitimate intelligence, we had no idea what he was doing, and was given an authorization of \$250,000. . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: to collect information because our surrogates were out on the road. They had no protection. We had information that there were going to be demonstrations against them. That, eh, we had to have a plan to get information as to what liabilities they were going to be confronted with, and Liddy was charged with doing this. We had no knowledge that he was going to bug the DNC. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: The point is, that's untrue.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Magruder did know.

DEAN: Magruder specifically instructed him to go back in the DNC.

PRESIDENT: He did?

DEAN: Yes.

PRESIDENT: You know this? Yeah, I see . . . OK.

DEAN: Ah, I honestly believe that no one over here knew that. I know, uh, as God is my maker, I had no knowledge that they were going to do this.

PRESIDENT: Bob didn't either.

DEAN: Ah, but then . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] You're not thinking that Bob Haldeman he . . . wouldn't . . .

DEAN: Bob, I don't believe specifically knew they were going in there. I don't think he did. I think he knew that there was a capacity to do this, but he wouldn't, wasn't giving a specific direction.

PRESIDENT: Strachan, he know?

DEAN: I think Strachan did know.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] . . . going back into the DNC . . . Hunt [inaudible]

DEAN: All right. So, uh, those people are in trouble as a result of their grand jury and the trial. Mitchell, of course, was never called during the trial. Now . . .

PRESIDENT: Mitchell has given a sworn statement, hasn't he?

DEAN: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: To the Bureau?

DEAN: To the grand jury.

PRESIDENT: Did he go over to the grand jury?

DEAN: He had, we had an arrangement whereby he went down to -- with several of them -- because it was, you know, the heat of this thing and the implications on the election, we made an arrangement where they could quietly go into the Department of Justice and have one of the Assistant U. S. Attorneys come over and take their testimony and then read it before the grand jury. Uh, . . . Although I . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: That's right. Mitchell was actually called before the grand jury. The grand jury would not settle for less. The jurors wanted him.

PRESIDENT: And he went.

DEAN: And he went.

PRESIDENT: Good.

DEAN: Uh, I don't know what he said, sir, I've never seen the transcript of the grand jury. Now, what, what has happened post June 17. Well it was, I was under pretty clear instructions not really to investigate this because this was something that just could have, could have been disastrous on the election if it, if all hell has broken loose and, I worked on a theory of containment . . .

PRESIDENT: Sure.

DEAN: to try to hold it right where it was.

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: There's no doubt I, uh, I, uh, that, uh, I was totally aware of what the Bureau was doing at all times. I was totally aware of what the grand jury was doing.

PRESIDENT: You mean . . .

DEAN: I knew what witnesses were going to be called, I knew what they were going to be asked and I had to.

PRESIDENT: Why did Petersen play the, play the game so straight on this?

DEAN: Cause Petersen's a soldier, he played, he kept me informed. He told me when we had problems, where we had problems, and the like. Uh, he believes in, in, in you. He believes in this Administration. This Administration has made him. Uh, I don't think he's done anything improper, but he did make sure the

investigation was narrowed down to the very, very fine. . .

PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

DEAN: criminal things. Which was a break for us. There's no doubt about it.

PRESIDENT: Do you honestly feel he did an adequate job?

DEAN: He's, they ran that investigation out to the fullest extent they could follow a lead and, and that was it.

PRESIDENT: But the point is, of course, I suppose he could be criticized for not doing an adequate job. Why didn't he call Haldeman? Why didn't he get a statement from Colson? Oh, they did get Colson.

DEAN: That's right. But the thing is that based on their FBI interviews there was no reason to follow up, there were no leads there. Colson said, "I have no knowledge of this" to the FBI. Uh, Strachan said, "I have no knowledge of. . ." You know, they didn't ask Strachan any Watergate questions; they asked him about Segretti. Uh, they said, "What's your connection with Liddy?" And he just said, "Well, I, you know, I just met him over there," and they never really pressed him. They didn't, you know, they looked. . . Strachan appeared, uh, as a result of coaching, to be the dumbest paper pusher in the bowels of the, of the White House.

PRESIDENT: I understand.

DEAN: All right, now, post June 17th, these guys immediately. . . It's very, very interesting. Liddy, for example, the Friday before, uh, on, I guess, ~~It~~ was on the, on the 15th, the 16th, uh, of, uh, June, had been in Henry Petersen's office with another member of my staff on campaign

compliance problems, uh, joking. After the incident, he went, he ran, uh, Kleindienst down at Burning Tree Country Club and told him that, "You've got to get my men out of jail." Which was kind of a . . . Kleindienst said, "You get the hell out of here, kid. Uh, whatever you've got to say, just say to somebody else; don't bother me." And, this has never come up.

PRESIDENT: Yup.

DEAN: Uh, Liddy said, said that, you know, they all got counsel instantly, and said that, you know, we'll, we'll ride this thing out. Alright, then they started making demands. We've gotta have attorney's fees. Uh, we don't have any money ourselves, and that you're asking us to take this through the election. All right. So arrangements were made through Mitchell, uh, initiating it, in discussions that I was present, that these guys had to be taken care of, their attorneys' fees had to be done. Kalmbach was brought in. Uh, Kalmbach raised some cash. Uh. They were, uh, you know. . .

PRESIDENT: They put that under the cover of the Cuban Committee.

DEAN: Yeah, they had a Cuban Committee, and they had, some of it was given to Hunt's lawyer, who in turn passed it out. You know, when Hunt's wife was flying to Chicago with ten thousand, she was actually, I understand, after the fact now, was going to pass that money to one of the Cubans, to meet him in Chicago and pass it to somebody there.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] well [inaudible] it's too late to think about it, but I would certainly keep that, that cover, for whatever it's worth . . .

DEAN: Uh, well . . .

PRESIDENT: Don't you agree?

DEAN: Well, that's, that's, that's the most troublesome post-thing, uh, because (1) Bob is involved in that, John is involved in that, I am involved in that, Mitchell is involved in that and that's an obstruction of justice.

PRESIDENT: In other words, the fact that, uh, that you were taking care of witnesses . . .

DEAN: That's right. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: How was Bob in it?

DEAN: Well, they ran out of money over there. Bob had three hundred and fifty thousand dollars in a safe over here which was really set aside for polling purposes. Uh, and there was no other source of money, so, they came over here and said, "You all have got to give us some money."

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: I had to go to Bob and say, "Bob, you know, you gotta have some, they need some money over there." He said, "What for?" And so I had to tell him what it was for, because he wasn't about to just send money over there willy-nilly. And, uh, John was involved in those discussions, and we decided, you know, that, you know, that there was no price too high to pay to let this thing blow up in front of the election.

PRESIDENT: I think you should handle that one pretty well.

DEAN: Oh, I think so.

PRESIDENT: That issue, I mean.

DEAN: I think we can.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: That's right, I think we can too.

PRESIDENT: Who else?

DEAN: But, but . . . Now, here's what's happening right now.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: I'm going to bring matters to the . . . This is . . . One, it's going to be a continual blackmail operation by Hunt and Liddy and the Cubans, . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah?

DEAN: . . . no doubt about it. And McCord . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: who, who is another one involved. McCord has asked for nothing. Uh, McCord did ask to meet with somebody, and it was Jack Caulfield who is his old friend who got him hired over there. And, when, when Caulfield had him hired he was a perfectly legitimate security man, and he wanted to know, well, you know, he wanted to talk about commutation and things like that. And as you know, Colson had talked to, indirectly to Hunt about commutation. [clears throat] All these things are bad in, in, in, that they're problems, they're promises, they're commitments, they're the very sort of thing that the Senate's going to be looking most for. I don't think they can find it, frankly.

PRESIDENT: Pretty hard.

DEAN: Pretty hard, damn hard, it's all cash, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, it's pretty hard as far as witnesses are concerned.

DEAN: That's right. Now, the blackmail is continuing. Hunt called one of the lawyers from the Re-Election Committee on last Friday, to meet with him on, over the week-end. The guy came in to me, to see me, to leave a message directly from Hunt to me, for the first time.

PRESIDENT: Is Hunt on bail?

DEAN: Pardon.

PRESIDENT: Is Hunt on bail?

DEAN: Hunt is on bail, correct. Uh, Hunt now is demanding another \$72,000 for his own personal expenses, another \$50,000 to pay his attorneys fees, a hundred and twenty some thousand dollars. Wants it, wanted it by the close of business yesterday, because he says, "I'm going to be sentenced on Friday and I've got to be able to get my financial affairs in order." I told this fellow O'Brien, you know, "All right, you've come to the wrong man fellow I'm not involved in the money. Uh, don't know a thing about it, can't help you." I said, "You better scramble around elsewhere." Now, O'Brien is, O'Brien is, is a ball-player. He's been, he's carried tremendous water for us. Uh, he . . .

PRESIDENT: He isn't Hunt's lawyer?

DEAN: No, he is, he is our lawyer at the Re-Election Committee.

PRESIDENT: I see, uh.

DEAN: So he's safe. There's no problem there. But it raises the whole question of Hunt now has made a direct threat against Ehrlichman, as a result of this. This is, is his blackmail: He says, "I will bring John Ehrlichman down to his knees. And put him in jail. Uh, I have done enough seamy things for he and Krogh, uh, that they'll never survive it."

PRESIDENT: Is that on Ellsberg?

DEAN: Ellsberg and apparently some other things, I don't know the full extent of it. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: I don't know about anything else.

DEAN: I don't know either and I'm, I'd hate to learn some of these things. So that, that's that situation. Now, where are the soft points? How many people know about this? Well, uh, well let me go one step further in this, this whole thing. The Cubans that were used in the Watergate were also the same Cubans that Hunt and Liddy used for this California-Ellsberg thing, the break-in out there.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: So they're, they're aware of that. How high their knowledge is is something else. Hunt and Liddy, of course, are totally aware of, of it, and the fact that, uh, it was right out of the White House.

PRESIDENT: I don't know what the hell we did that for.

DEAN: I don't either.

PRESIDENT: What in the name of God did that . . .

DEAN: Mr. President, there have been a couple things around here that I've gotten wind of. Uh, there was at one time a desire to do a second-story job on the Brookings Institute, where they had the Pentagon Papers. And I flew to California because I was told that John had instructed it, and he said, "I really hadn't, that's a misimpression, but for Christ's sake, turn it off." And I did. I came back and turned it off because, you know, when you, you know, if the risk isn't minimal and the gain is fantastic -- is something else. With a low risk and, uh, no gain, uh, gee, it's just, uh, it's not worth it. Well, who knows about this all now? All right, you've got . . . the Cubans' lawyer, a man by the name of Rothblatt, who is a no good,

publicity seeking, son of a bitch, to be very frank about it. He had to be turned down and tuned off. He was canned by his own people because they didn't trust him. They were trying to run a different route than he wanted to run. He didn't want them to be plead guilty. He wants to represent them before the Senate. So F. Lee Bailey, who was the partner of one of, one of the men representing McCord, uh, got in and, and cooled Rothblatt down. So F. Lee Bailey's got knowledge. Uh, Hunt's lawyer, a man by the name of Bittman who's the, an excellent criminal lawyer from the Democratic era of Bobby Kennedy. He's got knowledge. Uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: You think, you think he's got some knowledge.

DEAN: Well, everybody -- not only, all, all the direct knowledge that Hunt and Liddy have, as well as all the hearsay they have.

PRESIDENT: I see.

DEAN: Uh, you've got the two lawyers over at the Re-Election Committee who did an investigation to find out the facts. Slowly they got the whole picture. They're, they're solid, but they're . . .

PRESIDENT: But they know?

DEAN: But they know. Uh, you've got them, and an awful lot of -- all the principals involved know. Uh, some people's wives know.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

DEAN: Uh, there's no doubt about that. Mrs. Hunt was the savviest woman in the world. She had the whole picture together.

PRESIDENT: Did she?

DEAN: Yeah, this, uh, apparently she was the pillar of

strength in that family before her death. And, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: It's a great sadness. The basis -- as a matter of fact, even if there was a discussion by me with somebody about Hunt's problem after his wife's death, I said, "Of course, commutation could be considered on the basis of his wife." That's the only discussion I ever had with anybody.

DEAN: Right. Ah, so that's, that's it. That's the extent of the knowledge. Now where, what are the soft spots on this. Now first of all, there is a, there's the problem of the continued blackmail. . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: . . . which will not only go on now it will, will go on when these people are in prison, and it will compound the obstruction of justice situation. It will cost money, it's dangerous. Nobody can . . . people around here are not pros at this sort of thing. This is the sort of thing Mafia people can do -- washing money, getting clean money, and things like that. Ah, we just don't know about those things because we're not used to, you know, we're not criminals, we're not used to dealing in that business.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: It's a, it's a tough thing to know how to do.

PRESIDENT: Maybe we can't do that.

DEAN: That's right. It's a real problem as to whether we can even do it. Plus there's a real problem in raising money. Ah, Mitchell has been working on raising some money, ah, feeling he's got, you know, he's got, he's one of the ones with the most to lose. Ah, but there's no denying the fact that the White

House and, ah, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Dean are involved in some of the early money decisions.

PRESIDENT: How much money do you need?

DEAN: I would say these people are going to cost, ah, a million dollars over the next, ah, few years.

PRESIDENT: We could get that.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: You, on the money, you need the money. I mean, ah, you can get the money, but its . . .

DEAN: Well I think that we're . . .

PRESIDENT: My point is, you can, you can get a million dollars, and you can get it in cash. Ah, I know where it could be got.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: I mean, ah, it's not easy, but it could be done. But, ah, the question is, who the hell would handle it?

DEAN: That's right. Ah.

PRESIDENT: Any ideas on that?

DEAN: Well I would think that would be something Mitchell ought to be charged with.

PRESIDENT: I would think so too.

DEAN: And get some, get some pros to help him.

PRESIDENT: Let me say, there shouldn't be a lot of people running around getting money. He said ah --

DEAN: Well he's got one person doing it who I'm not sure is ah --

PRESIDENT: Who's that?

DEAN: He's got Fred LaRue, ah, doing it. Now Fred started out going out trying to solicit money from all kinds of people. Now I learned about that and I said, "My God, that's just awful, don't do it."

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: Ah, people are going to ask what the money's for.
He's working, he's apparently talked to Tom Pappas.

PRESIDENT: I know him.

DEAN: And Pappas is, uh, agreed to come up with a sizeable amount, I gather.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] Well, what do you think? You need, uh, you don't need a million right away, do you? But you need a million, is that right?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And you need it in cash, don't you. If you wanted to put that through, would you put that through, eh, I'm just thinking out loud here for the moment, would you put that through the Cuban Committee?

DEAN: Uh, no . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] It's going to be, it's going to be, uh, cash money [inaudible]. How, if that ever comes out are you gonna handle it. The Cuban Committee is an obstruction of justice, if they want to help.

DEAN: Well, they've got a, they've got priests in it.

PRESIDENT: Would you like to put the money in. Would that, would that give a little bit of a cover?

DEAN: That would give some to the Cubans and possibly Hunt.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Uh, then you've got Liddy and McCord is not, not accepting any money. So, he's not a bought man right now.

PRESIDENT: OK.

DEAN: Alright, let me, uh, . . . /

PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

DEAN: continue, a little bit here now. The, uh, when I say this, uh, is a growing cancer, uh, I say it for reasons

like this. Bud Krogh, in his testimony before the grand jury, was forced to perjure himself. Uh, he's haunted by it. Uh, Bud said, "I haven't had a pleasant day on the job."

PRESIDENT: What, said what?

DEAN: He said, "I have not had a pleasant day on my job." He talked . . . Apparently, he said, "I told my wife all about this," he said, "the curtain may ring down one of these days, And, uh, I may have to face the music, which I'm perfectly willing to do." Ah,

PRESIDENT: What did he perjure himself on, John?

DEAN: His, did, uh, did he know the Cubans. He did. Uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: He said he didn't?

DEAN: That's right. They didn't press him hard . . .

PRESIDENT: He might be able . . . I'm just trying to think. Perjury's an awful hard rap to prove, if you think about it. Now go ahead.

DEAN: Well, so that, that's the first. That's one perjury. Now, Mitchell and, and, uh, Magruder are potential perjuries. There's always a possibility of any one of these individuals blowing. Hunt, Liddy, Liddy's in jail right now. He's serving, he's trying to get good time right now. I think Liddy is probably, in his, in his own bizarre way, the strongest of all of them. Uh, so there's, there's that possibility.

PRESIDENT: Your, your major, your major guy to keep under control is Hunt.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: I think. Because he knows . . .

DEAN: He knows so much.

PRESIDENT: He knows alot of other things.

DEAN: He knows so much, is right. Uh, he could sink Chuck Colson. Apparently, apparently, he is quite distressed with Colson. He thinks Colson's abandoned him. Eh, Colson was to meet with him when he was out there, after you know, he had left the White House. He met with him through his lawyer. Hunt raised the question he wanted money. Colson's lawyer told him that Colson wasn't doing anything with money. And Hunt took offense at that immediately, that, uh, that Colson had abandoned him. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Don't you, just looking at the immediate problem, don't you have to, have to handle Hunt's financial situation.

DEAN: I, I think that's . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . damn soon.

DEAN: That is, uh, I talked to Mitchell about that last night and, and, uh,

PRESIDENT: It seems to me we have to keep the cap on the bottle that much . . .

DEAN: That's right, that's right.

PRESIDENT: Otherwise, we won't have any options.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Either that or it all blows right now.

DEAN: Well, you know, that's, that's the question. Uh. . .

PRESIDENT: Now go ahead with the others. We've got Hunt.

DEAN: Alright, now we've got . . .

PRESIDENT: Krogh.

DEAN: Now we've got Kalmbach.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's another one too.

DEAN: Kalmbach received. . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: at the close of the, of the, uh, sixty-eight campaign, in January of sixty-nine, he got a million seven dollars,

uh, a million seven hundred thousand dollars, to be custodian for. And it came down from New York. It was placed in safe deposit boxes here. Uh, some other people were on the boxes, and ultimately the money was taken out to California. Alright. There's knowledge of the fact that he did start with a million seven; several people know this. Now, since sixty-nine, he's spent a good deal of this money and, and, uh, accounting for it is going to be very difficult for Herb. For example, he spent, oh, close to five hundred thousand dollars on private polling. Now that's just, opens up a whole new thing. It's not illegal, but, uh, more of the same sort of thing.

PRESIDENT: I don't think that poses a hell of a problem, does it?

DEAN: No, I don't think so. Uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Everybody does polling.

DEAN: That's right, uh, there's nothing, nothing criminal about it, it was private polls, it was proper money.

PRESIDENT: Nothing improper about it. . .[inaudible] polls all through the years.

DEAN: That's right. Uh, he sent four hundred thousand dollars, as he's described to me, somewhere in the south for another candidate. I assume this was four hundred, uh, that went to . . .

PRESIDENT: Wallace.

DEAN: Wallace, right. Uh, he has maintained, uh, a, a man who I only know by the name of Tony, who was the fellow who did the, the Chappaquidick study and . . .

PRESIDENT: I heard about that.

DEAN: Other, other odd jobs like that, nothing illegal, uh, but closer. Uh, I don't know of anything that Herb has done that is illegal, other than the fact that he

doesn't want to blow the whistle on a lot of people.
And may find himself in a perjury situation.

PRESIDENT: Well, if he can, do you think that he will be asked about that money?

DEAN: He will. What'll happen is when they call him up there, and of course he has no immunity, uh, they'll say, how did you happen, how did you pay Mr. Segretti. Well, I had cash on hand. Well, how much cash did you have on hand.

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: Uh, where do you go from there. Where did you get the cash. And a whole series of questions. His bank records indicate he had cash on hand. Cause some of these were set up in trustee accounts.

PRESIDENT: How would you handle him, John; for example, could you just let me put the whole thing out. I don't think, I mean, I don't mind the five hundred thousand dollars and I don't mind four hundred hundred thousand dollars for activities.

DEAN: No, that, that, uh, that doesn't bother me either. There's, as I say, Herb's problems are politically embarrassing but not, not criminal.

PRESIDENT: Well, if they're embarrassing, sure he, he just handled matters between campaigns for me and, uh . . . These were surveys, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc. There's no need to account for that. No law requires you to account for that.

DEAN: Right. Uh, now. . .

PRESIDENT: The source of the money, there's no illegality in having a surplus is there, in cash, afterwards?

DEAN: No, the money is, it has always been argued by Stans came from pre-convention. . .

PRESIDENT: Pre-convention. . .

DEAN: For the, and pre- primary, for this, for the sixty-eight race. It was just set aside. Uh, that, that all can be explained. I think that the . . .

PRESIDENT: What are the other vulnerabilities? Go ahead.

DEAN: The other vulnerabilities. We've got a, a runaway grand jury up in the Southern District.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I heard.

DEAN: They're after Mitchell and Stans on some sort of bribe or influence-peddling with Vesco. . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Uh, they're also going to try to drag Ehrlichman into that. Apparently Ehrlichman had some meetings with Vesco, also. And, Don Nixon, Jr., came in to see John a couple times, uh, about the problem.

PRESIDENT: }
 DEAN: } [inaudible]

DEAN: That's right, and, and, and, uh,

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] Ehrlichman told him [inaudible]

DEAN: Yeah, well, I think . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . Or White House attorney . . .

DEAN: No one has done anything for Vesco.

PRESIDENT: As a matter of, not the prosecutors?

DEAN: No. The uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: Will Ehrlichman, incidentally, have to appear there?

DEAN: Before that grand jury? Yes. He could very well.

PRESIDENT: Uh, we could, there's no immunity there?

DEAN: Uh, not really. Uh, criminal charge . . .

PRESIDENT: Criminal charge.

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] charge. Go ahead.

DEAN: Right, that's a little different. I think that would

be dynamite to defend, [inaudible] uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: That . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] Since that's a criminal charge [inaudible]
Use the Flanigan . . .

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: analogy.

DEAN: Right. Uh, well, that's, that's pretty much the over-
all picture, and probably the most troublesome thing,
well, the Segretti thing, let's get down to that. I
think Bob has indicated to me he's told you a lot of,
of it. That he indeed did authorize it. He didn't
authorize anything like ultimately evolved.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: He was aware of it, he was aware that Chapin and
Strachan were looking for somebody.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Again, this is one that, uh, it is potential that
Dwight Chapin, Chapin should have a felony charge
against him in this, because . . .

PRESIDENT: Felony?

DEAN: Felony. Because he has to, he has to disprove a
negative. The negative is that he didn't control and
direct Segretti.

PRESIDENT: Would the felony be perjury again?

DEAN: Uh, no, the felony would in this instance being a
potential use of the, one of the civil rights statutes
for anybody who interferes with a candidate for a
national office, interferes with their campaign in
any way.

PRESIDENT: Why isn't it under a civil rights statutes to pick up
any of, these clowns that were demonstrating against us?

DEAN: I, I, I've argued that they used that for that very purpose, uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: Really?

DEAN: Yes I have. And, uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: We were closer -- nuts interfering with the campaign.

DEAN: That's exactly right, exactly right. But . . .

PRESIDENT: When I think, I'm not as concerned about that because it is so bad the way it's been put out on the PR side. It has ended up on the PR side very confused. It will look bad when it's attributed, and I don't, I can't see the criminal thing, but I may be wrong.

DEAN: What really, what really, what really bothers me is this, this growing situation, as I say it is growing, because of the, the continued need to provide support for . . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: the Watergate people who are going to hold us up for everything they've got.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: And the need for some people to perjure themselves as they go down the road here, uh, if this think ever blows, and we're in a cover-up situation, I think it'd be extremely damaging to you and the, uh. . .

PRESIDENT: Sure. The whole concept of administration justice.

DEAN: That's right. Uh,

PRESIDENT: Which we cannot have.

DEAN: That's what really troubles me. For example, what happens if it starts breaking and they do find a criminal case against a Haldeman, a Dean, a Mitchell, an Ehrlichman. Uh, that is . . .

PRESIDENT: If it really comes down to that, we cannot play the game, we have to shed it or contain it, then.

DEAN: That's right. I'm coming down to the, what I really think is that Bob and John and John Mitchell and I should sit down and spend a day or however long to figure out (1) how this can be carved away from you, so it does not damage you or the Presidency, cause it just can't and it's not something, you're not involved in it, and it's something you shouldn't be . . .

PRESIDENT: That's true.

DEAN: Well, I know, sir, it is. Well, I can just tell from our conversation that, you know, these are things that you have no knowledge of.

PRESIDENT: The absurdity of the whole damn thing, bugging and so forth. But let me say, I was keenly aware of the fact that, uh, Colson and all, and so forth, were doing their best to get information, and so forth and so on. But they all knew very well that they were supposed to comply with the law.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: No question.

DEAN: Uh.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] Do you think that really the man, the trigger man was Colson on this?

DEAN: Well, he was one of, he was just in the chain. He would, he helped push the thing all the . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] I know why. That was the plan of ITT. He was trying to get something going there, because ITT, they were bugging us. I mean they were giving us hell.

DEAN: Well, well I know he used, uh, Hunt . . .

PRESIDENT: Hunt. I knew about that.

DEAN: Yuh.

PRESIDENT: I did know about that. I knew that there, there was something going on there. . .

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: but I didn't know it was Hunt's.

DEAN: Uh, that's what really, what really troubles me is, you know, one, will this thing not break some day . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: and the whole thing . . . domino situation.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: Everything starts crumbling, fingers will be pointing and . . .

PRESIDENT: That's right, that's right.

DEAN: Bob will be accused of things he's never heard of, and he'll have to disprove it. And it'll just get nasty and . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: it'll be a real . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: a real bad situation. And the person who'll be hurt by it most will be you . . .

PRESIDENT: Of course.

DEAN: and the Presidency. And I just don't think . . .

PRESIDENT: First because I am expected to know this. I'm supposed to, supposed to check these things.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And so on. But let's, let's, let's come back to a further [inaudible] of John Dean. What are your feelings, yourself, John? You know pretty well what they're all saying. What are your feelings about the [inaudible] chances?

DEAN: I am not confident that, uh, we can ride through this. I think there are, I think there are soft spots.

PRESIDENT: You used to feel . . .

DEAN: Yeah, I felt, I felt comfortable for this reason. I've noticed of recent, since the publicity has increased on this, on this thing again with the Gray hearings,

that everybody is now starting to watch out for their own behind. Uh. . .

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: Everyone's pulling in, they're getting their own counsel, more counsel are getting involved.

PRESIDENT: Right. Right.

DEAN: Uh, you know, how do I protect my ass.

PRESIDENT: Well, they're scared.

DEAN: They're scared. And that's just, you know, that's bad. We were able to hold it for a long time.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, I know.

DEAN: Uh, another thing is now, you know, my ability now to deal with the multitude of people I've been dealing with has been hampered because of Gray blowing me up into the front page.

PRESIDENT: Your cover's blown.

DEAN: That's right. And it's, it was . . .

PRESIDENT: Go on, so on, so. So what we really come down to it is, what, what would you do? Let, let us suppose that you and Haldeman and Ehrlichman and Mitchell recognize we can't hold this. What, what then are you going to say, to put out. Complete disclosure, isn't that the best way to do it.

DEAN: Well, one way to do it is to. . .

PRESIDENT: That'd be my view on it.

DEAN: One way to do it is for you to inf. . ., tell the Attorney General that you finally, you know, really this is the first time that you're getting all of the pieces together. Uh. . .

PRESIDENT: Ask for another grand jury?

DEAN: Ask for another grand jury. The way it could be done, though, is the way that, for example, I think that we could avoid, uh, criminal liability for countless

people, and the ones that did get it, it could be minimal.

PRESIDENT: How?

DEAN: Well, I think just by thinking it all through first as to how, you know, some people could be granted immunity, uh,

PRESIDENT: Like Magruder?

DEAN: Yeah, to come forward. Uh, but some people are going to have to go to jail. That's the long and short of it also.

PRESIDENT: Who? Let's talk about that.

DEAN: All right. Uh, I think I could, for one.

PRESIDENT: You go to jail?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Oh hell no. I can't see how you can.

DEAN: I've already got. . .

PRESIDENT: I can't see how. Let us say, I can't tell how a legal case can be made against you, John.

DEAN: It would be, it would be tough, but you know, but, uh, I can see people pointing fingers, you know, to get out of their own, put me in an impossible position of disproving too many negatives.

PRESIDENT: Oh, no! Let me say I did not get the impression here -- But just looking at it from a cold legal standpoint: you are a lawyer, you were the counsel, you were doing what you were doing as counsel. You were not [inaudible]. What would you go to jail on?

DEAN: The obstruction of justice. /

PRESIDENT: The obstruction of justice?

DEAN: That is the only one that bothers me.

PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. I think that one. I think that, I feel it could be cut off at the pass, maybe, the

obstruction of justice.

DEAN: It could be, you know how, one of the -- that's why --

PRESIDENT: Sometimes it is well to give them something, and then they don't want the bigger push then?

DEAN: That's right. I think that, uh, I think that with proper coordination with the Department of Justice, Henry Petersen is the only man I know that is bright enough and knowledgeable enough in the criminal law and in the process, that could really tell us how this could be put together so it is maximum to carve it away with the minimum damage to individuals involved.

PRESIDENT: Does Petersen know the whole story?

DEAN: No, I know he doesn't now. I know he doesn't now. I'm talking about somebody who I have over the years grown to have enough faith in that it's possible that we have to, we have to, uh, put him in a very difficult situation as the head of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice and the oath of office.

PRESIDENT: Let's talk about your obstruction of justice though. I don't see it. I can't see it.

DEAN: I've been a conduit, I've been a conduit for information on, on, taking care of people out there who were guilty of crimes.

PRESIDENT: Oh, you mean like, the, uh, the blackmail.

DEAN: The blackmail, right.

PRESIDENT: Well I wonder if that part of it can't be . . . I wonder if that doesn't, let me put it frankly. I wonder if that doesn't have to be continued?

DEAN: [clears throat]

PRESIDENT: Let me put it this way, let us suppose that you get, you get the million bucks, then you get the proper way to handle it, and you can hold that side.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: It would seem to me that would be worthwhile.

DEAN: [clears throat]

PRESIDENT: On the other. . .

DEAN: Well, that, you know, that's a problem. . .

PRESIDENT: Then you have the problem of Hunt and his, his clemency.

DEAN: That's right, and you're going to have the clemency problem for the others. They all would expect to be out, and that may put you in a position that's just . . . untenable at some point. You know, the Watergate hearings just over, Hunt now demanding clemency, or he's going to blow, and politically it would be impossible for you to do it. You know after everyone. . .

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: I'm not sure that you'll ever be able to deliver on the clemency, it may be just too hot.

PRESIDENT: You can't do it politically until the '74 election, that's for sure. But even then, your point is that, even then you couldn't do it.

DEAN: That's right, it may further involve you in a way you shouldn't be involved in.

PRESIDENT: No it's wrong, that's for sure.

DEAN: Well, but I, you know, there have been some bad judgments made, there have been some necessary judgments made.

PRESIDENT: Before the election?

DEAN: Before the election, and, in a way, there have been necessary ones you know, before the election. There, you know, we've just, to me. . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: there was no way that the burden. . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: the second administration. . .

PRESIDENT: We're all in it.

DEAN: That something is not going to go away.

PRESIDENT: No, it isn't.

DEAN: It is not going to go away, sir.

PRESIDENT: It's not going to go away. The idea that, uh, that, uh, well people are going to get tired and all that sort of thing. . .

DEAN: Anything will spark it back into life. It's got to be, uh, it's got to be. . .

PRESIDENT: Well, it's too much to the partisan interest of others to spark it back into life.

DEAN: And it seems to me the only way that . . .

PRESIDENT: Who else, though, let's leave you and I out of it. I don't, don't think . . . on the, uh, on the obstruction of justice thing, I think that we can handle, I don't know why, but I believe

DEAN: Well, it's possible, I, I, I . . .

PRESIDENT: I think you may be overplaying that. Who else, who else, who else do you think has . . .

DEAN: Potential criminal liability?

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: I think Ehrlichman does. I think that, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Why? What did he do?

DEAN: Because of this conspiracy to burglarize the, uh, uh, Ellsberg office.

PRESIDENT: You mean that, that is provided Hunt breaks.

DEAN: Well, the funny, now let me tell you something interesting about that, within the file . . .

PRESIDENT: Oh I saw that, the picture . . .

DEAN: Yeah, the picture. That, you see, that's not all that's buried, and while we can, we, I think we've got it buried, there's no telling when that's going to pop up. The Cubans, uh, could start this whole thing. Uh, when the Ervin Committee starts running down why this mysterious telephone was here at the White House, uh, listed in the name of a secretary. One of these, some of these secretaries have a little idea about this, and they can be broken down just so fast. That's another thing I meant, missed in the cycle, in the circle. Uh, Liddy's secretary, for example, is knowledgeable; Magruder's secretary is knowledgeable.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

DEAN: Uh,

PRESIDENT: So Ehrlichman on the, uh . . .

DEAN: What, what I'm coming here today with is I don't have a plan on how to solve it right now, but I think at this juncture we should begin to think in terms of, of how to cut the losses, how to minimize the further growth of this thing, rather than further compound it by, you know, ultimately paying these guys forever.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: I think we've got to look . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, at this moment, don't you agree that we better take the Hunt thing, I mean, that's worth it at the moment.

DEAN: That's worth buying time on, right.

PRESIDENT: Worth buying time on, I agree.

DEAN: Uh, the grand jury is going to reconvene next week after Sirica sentences. Uh, but that's why I think that, you know, John and Bob have met with me, they've never met with Mitchell on this. We've never had a real down and out with everybody that, uh, has the most to lose, and the most, and is the most danger for you to have them have criminal liability. I think Bob has a potential criminal liability, frankly. I think, in other words, a lot of these people could be indicted, they might never . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: might never, uh, be convicted, but if the thought of indictments. . .

PRESIDENT: Suppose, suppose they are indicted.

DEAN: I think that would be devastating.

PRESIDENT: Suppose the worst -- if Bob were indicted, Ehrlichman were indicted. I mean, I must say maybe we just better then try to tough it through. Do you get the point?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: If, if, if, for example, our, our, say well, let's cut our losses. That means we're going to go down the road to cut our losses, no more blackmail and all the rest, and the thing blows, and indict Bob [inaudible] you'd never recover from that, John.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: It's, we'd better fight it out, instead. You see, that's the, the other thing. Better just to fight it out, not let people testify, so forth and so on. Now, on the other hand, we realize that we have this weakness that, uh, we've got this weakness in terms of . . . blackmail.

DEAN: It's what . . . if we . . . you know -- there are two routes, you know, one is to figure out how to cut the losses and, and, and minimize the, the human impact and get you up and out and away from it in any way. Uh, in, in a way that would never come back to haunt you. Uh, that's one, one general alternative. The other is to go down the road, just hunker down, fight it at every corner, every turn. Uh, don't let people testify, cover it up is what we're really talking about. Just keep it buried and just hope that we can do it. Hope that we can make good decisions at the right time. Keep our heads cool, uh, we make the right moves, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: And just take the heat.

DEAN: And just take the heat.

PRESIDENT: Now, the second line of attack. You discuss this the way, way you. . . I want you to still consider my scheme of having you, you brief the cabinet, just in very general terms, and the leaders in very general terms and maybe some, some, very general statements with regard to my investigation. Answer questions, basically on the question of what they told you and not what you thought you knew.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: Haldeman is not involved; Ehrlichman is not involved.

DEAN: Well I can, you know, if we go that route, sir, I can, I can give a show, that, you know, we can sell, you know, like we were selling Wheaties on our position. Uh, there's no . . .

PRESIDENT: The problems that you have are, the, uh, these mine-fields down the road. I think that the most difficult

problem is the, are the, are the guys that are going to jail. I think you're right about that. I agree. Now, and also the fact that we're not going to be able to give clemency.

DEAN: That's right. How long will they take, how long will they sit there. I don't know, we don't know what they'll be sentenced to. There's always the chance . . .

PRESIDENT: Thirty years.

DEAN: It could be, you know, they haven't announced yet but it...

PRESIDENT: That's what the potential is

DEAN: Uh, it's even higher than that. It's about fifty years, with all the . . .

PRESIDENT: It's so ridiculous.

DEAN: Ah, well, you know, what's so incredible is these fellows . . .

PRESIDENT: People breaking and entering and so forth can get two years.

DEAN: Well, the other . . .

PRESIDENT: No, no weapons, no results. What the hell are they talking about?

DEAN: The individuals who are charged with shooting John Stennis are on the street. They were given, you know, one was put out on a personal recognizance rather than bond. They've got these fellows all stuck with \$100,000 bonds. The same judge, Sirica, let one guy, who's, who's charged with shooting a United States Senator out on the street.

PRESIDENT: Sirica did?

DEAN: Yeah, it's just, it's phenomenal.

PRESIDENT: I thought he was a hardline judge?

DEAN: He is, he is just a, a, peculiar animal. I don't know how he set, set the bond for one of the others. I don't have all the facts but he set the bond for one of the others somewhere around 50 or 60 thousand dollars. But still. That guy's in but didn't make bond, but you know, 60 thousand dollars as opposed to a hundred thousand dollars for these guys is phenomenal.

PRESIDENT: When could you have a meeting with these fellows as I think that time is of the essence. Could you do it this afternoon?

DEAN: Well Mitchell isn't here.

PRESIDENT: Tomorrow?

DEAN: Might be, might be worth it to have him come down, and now I think Bob and John did not want to talk to John about this, John Mitchell, and I don't believe they've had any conversations with him about it.

PRESIDENT: Let's get Haldeman in here now.

DEAN: Bob and I talked about just what we're talking about this morning. I told him that I thought you should have the facts, and he agrees. 'Cause we've got some tough hauls down the road. We . . .

PRESIDENT: Let me say [inaudible] hard line [inaudible].

DEAN: Yeah. I think we can always, you know, on the other side, charge them with blackmailing us and the, you know, this absurd stuff they're saying and . . .

PRESIDENT: See, the way you put it out here, letting it all hang out, it may never, I mean it may never, never [inaudible]

HALDEMAN ENTERS THE ROOM.

PRESIDENT: I was talking to John about this, this whole situation, and he said if we can get away from the bits and pieces that have broken out. He is right in recommending that, that there be a meeting at the very first possible time. [inaudible] Ehrlichman is no longer in California, but, uh, . . . Is tomorrow Thursday?

HALDEMAN: He, uh, John is still [inaudible]

DEAN: [inaudible]

PRESIDENT: Well, in any event, could we do it Thursday? This meeting, this meeting -- you can't do it today, can you?

DEAN: I don't think so. I was suggesting a meeting with Mitchell.

PRESIDENT: Mitchell, Ehrlichman, yourself and Bob, that's all. Now, Mitchell has to be there because, uh, he is seriously involved and, uh, we are trying to keep him with us. We've got to see how we, how we handle it from here on. We are in the process of having to determine which way to go, and, uh, John has thought it through as well as he can. I don't, I don't want Moore there on this occasion.

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: You haven't told Moore all of this, have you?

DEAN: Moore's got, by being with me, has more bits and pieces. I have had to give him . . .

PRESIDENT: Right.

DEAN: Because he is making judgments . . .

PRESIDENT: Right. Well, the point is when you get down to the PR, once you decide it, what to do, we can let him know so forth and so on. But it is the kind of thing that I think what really has to happen is for you to sit down with those three and for you to tell them exactly what you told me.

DEAN: Uh, huh.

PRESIDENT: It may take him about 35, 45 minutes. In other words he knows, John, uh, uh, knows, about everything and also what all the, what all the potential criminal liabilities are, you know, whether it is -- like that thing -- what about, uh, obstruction?

DEAN: Obstruction of justice. Right.

PRESIDENT: So forth and so on. And, uh, he, uh, I think, I think that. Then we've got to see what the line is. Whether the line is one of, uh, of uh, continuing to run a kind of stone wall, and take the heat from that, having in mind the fact that, uh, there are vulnerable points there -- the vulnerable points being that, well first of all the obvious ones, of course, would be that, uh, uh, one of the defendants, particularly Hunt, because he is most vulnerable in my opinion, might, uh, blow the whistle and his price is pretty high, but at least we should, we should buy the time on that as I pointed out to John. Apparently, who, who is dealing with Hunt at the moment now? Colson's

DEAN: Well, Mitchell's lawyer and, and Colson's lawyer both.

PRESIDENT: Who is familiar with him? At least he has to know before he is sentenced.

HALDEMAN: Who is Colson's lawyer? Is he in his law firm?

DEAN: Shapiro. Right. [inaudible] The other day he came up and . . .

HALDEMAN: Colson has told him everything, hasn't he?

DEAN: Yup. I gather he has. Uh, the other thing that bothered me about that, he's uh, he's a chatter. He came up to Fred Fielding of my office at Colson's going away party, I didn't go over there, at Blair House the

other night and said to Fred, he said, "now Chuck has had some mighty serious words with, eh, his friend Howard, and had some mighty serious messages back." Now, he knows, how does he know what Fielding knows, cause Fielding knows virtually nothing. Heh,

PRESIDENT: Well.

HALDEMAN: That's, that's where your dangers lie, in all these stupid human errors developing.

PRESIDENT: The point is Bob, let's face it, the secretaries know, assistants know a lot of this. Many of the principals might be harder to rock but you never know when they may crack. So we'll see, we'll see. First, you've got the Hunt problem that ought to be handled now.

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, incidentally, I do not think Colson should sit in on this meeting. Do you agree?

DEAN: No, I would agree.

PRESIDENT: OK, uh, how then who does, uh, talk to Colson, because somebody has to.

DEAN: No, Chuck, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Talks too much.

DEAN: I, I, you know, I like Chuck but, uh, I don't want Chuck to know anything that I'm doing, frankly. Heh.

PRESIDENT: Alright.

HALDEMAN: I think that's right. I think you want to be careful not to give Chuck any more knowledge than he's already got.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

DEAN: I wouldn't want Chuck even to know of the meeting, frankly.

PRESIDENT: Fortunately, fortunately, Chuck is very . . . I, I talk to him about many many political things, but I never talk to him about this sort of thing. He's very harmful, he must be damn sure that I didn't know anything, and I don't. In fact, I'm rather surprised at what you told me today. From what you said I gather the impression and, of course, your, your, your analysis does not for sure, uh, uh, indicate that Chuck knew that it was a bugging operation.

DEAN: That's correct, I don't have . . .

PRESIDENT: On the other hand . . .

DEAN: Chuck denies that.

PRESIDENT: On the other hand -- the other side of it is that Hunt had conversations with Chuck and it may be that Hunt told Chuck that it was bugging and so forth and so on.

DEAN: Um uh. Um, hum.

PRESIDENT: Is that correct?

DEAN: Um huh. They were very close. They, they talked too much about too many things. They were intimate on -- it sort of [clears throat]

HALDEMAN: Well then Chuck, there's another thing . . . Chuck has a problem. Chuck loves, he loves what he does and he likes to talk about it. He also is a name dropper.

PRESIDENT: Chuck might have gone around and talked to Hunt and said, "Well, I just talked to the President and the President feels we ought to get information about this or that on the other thing," and so forth.

DEAN: Well, Liddy is the same way, and . . .

PRESIDENT: I have talked about it, talked about this and that and the other thing. I, I have never talked to anybody but I have talked to Chuck and John and the rest. And I'm sure that Chuck may have, Chuck might have even talked to Hunt along those lines.

HALDEMAN: I would, well, anything could happen. I would doubt that.

DEAN: I would doubt that, too.

HALDEMAN: I don't think he would. Chuck is a name dropper in one sense, but not in that sense.

PRESIDENT: Well then . . .

HALDEMAN: I think he's very careful to keep the President out of things except when he's doing it, when he's very intentionally bringing the President in. For, for the President's purposes.

PRESIDENT: He has the impression though apparently that he, he really is as it turns out, that he really is the trigger man. Or he may well have been the trigger man where he just called up and said I want you to go and get that information and said [inaudible]. There's got to be a decision on it at that time. This is February.

DEAN: This, I figure it was some other . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah, it must have been.

DEAN: this was the call to Magruder from Colson saying "fish or cut bait." Hunt and Liddy were in his office.

PRESIDENT: In Colson's office.

DEAN: In Colson's office and he called Magruder and said let's fish or cut bait on this operation. Let's get it going.

HALDEMAN: Oh really.

DEAN: Yeah. This is, Magruder tells me this.

HALDEMAN: Of course that . . .

PRESIDENT: On the other hand . . .

HALDEMAN: Well now wait, wait. Magruder says

[MANY VOICES]

DEAN: Chuck, Chuck also told me that Hunt and Liddy were in his office when he made a call.

HALDEMAN: Well OK.

DEAN: So it gets, well, it was corroborated by the principal.

HALDEMAN: Hunt and Liddy haven't said that.

DEAN: No.

HALDEMAN: You haven't talked to Hunt and Liddy.

DEAN: I've talked to Liddy once right after the incident.

PRESIDENT: That's right but not . . . All right. The point is, the point is this, that, uh, uh, it's now time though to, Mitchell's got to sit down and know where the hell all this thing stands, too. You see John is concerned, as you know, about the posture of Ehrlichman. It worries him a great deal because its, uh, its, this is why the Hunt problem is so serious. Eh, because, eh, it's got nothing to do with the campaign . . .

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: The problem is basically the Ellsberg thing. I don't know what the hell the . . .

HALDEMAN: But why . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah, why?

HALDEMAN: Well, I was just going to say.

PRESIDENT: What is the answer on that. How do you keep that out? I don't know. Well, we can't keep it out if Hunt talks.

You see the point is -- it is irrelevant. The point is . . .

DEAN: You might put it on a national security ground basis, which is . . .

PRESIDENT & HALDEMAN: Which it absolutely was . . .

DEAN: and just say that, eh, this is not, you know, that this was . . .

PRESIDENT: My point is . . . CIA funds

HALDEMAN: Well seriously.

PRESIDENT: National security. We had to get information for national security grounds.

DEAN: Well then, the question is why didn't the CIA do it or why didn't the FBI do it?

PRESIDENT: Because, they were, we had to do it, we had to do it on a confidential basis.

HALDEMAN: Because we were checking them?

PRESIDENT: Neither could be trusted.

HALDEMAN: Well . . .

PRESIDENT: I think that's the way I view it.

HALDEMAN: [inaudible]. . . never been proven. There was need to question their job, their position.

PRESIDENT: You see, with the Monday thing and everything coming up, the whole thing was . . .

DEAN: I think we can probably get, get by on that.

PRESIDENT: I think on that one, I think we'll simply say this was a national security investigation that was conducted and the same with the drug field -- with Krogh. Krogh will say: [inaudible]. Well, it was a national security matter, that's why . . .

DEAN: That's where Bud rests easy because he's, he's convinced that he was doing it . . . he said there was

treason about the country, it could have threatened the way the war was handled.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: And by God . . .

HALDEMAN: Bud would, that's Bud's position?

DEAN: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Bud would say [inaudible] involved national security, and I was not in a position to divulge it.

Well, anyway let's just don't go beyond . . .

[inaudible] But, I do think now we, there's, there's a time element. We don't want to, want to talk to Mitchell, he doesn't want to talk and the rest of it. But John's right, there must be, must a four way talk here, in particular the ones that we can trust here -- uh, we've got to get a decision on it. It's not something that, you see, you got two ways, basically, you really only got two ways you can go. You either decide the whole goddamn thing is so full of problems of potential criminal liability, which is of concern to me. I don't give a damn about the publicity either, we can rock that through. We can let the whole thing hang out. It'll be a lousy story for a month [inaudible]. But the point is, I don't want any criminal liability. That's the thing that I'm concerned about, for members of the White House staff and I would trust for members of the Committee, and that means Magruder.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Let's face it, he's the one that's, I think Magruder's the major guy over there.

DEAN: I think he's got the most serious problem.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Well, then we talked about yesterday we got a, we got a question where your cut off point is. There's a possibility of cutting it at Liddy, where you are now.

PRESIDENT: Yup.

HALDEMAN: But to accomplish that requires . . .

PRESIDENT: Requires what?

HALDEMAN: . . . requires continued perjury by Magruder.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: And requires total commitment.

PRESIDENT: Total commitment, total control over all the defendants, which is another reason we're in a bad position.

HALDEMAN: [inaudible] beyond Liddy?

DEAN: Uh, no, other than, other than the fact as to Liddy, they have hearsay, uh,

HALDEMAN: We don't know about Hunt. Maybe Hunt has it tied to Colson. We don't know that, though, really.

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: I understand Hunt knows a hell of a lot more.

DEAN: Yeah, I do too; now what McCord . . .

HALDEMAN: You think he does? I'm afraid you're right but we don't know that.

PRESIDENT: I think we better assume it. I think Colson . . .

DEAN: Yeah. He's playing hard ball and he wouldn't play hard ball.

HALDEMAN: He is?

DEAN: Yeh, he wouldn't play hard ball unless he were pretty confident that he could cause an awful lot of grief.

HALDEMAN: Really?

DEAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: He's playing hard ball as regards Ehrlichman, for example, that sort of thing. He knows what he's got.

HALDEMAN: What he playing with, money?

DEAN: Yeh, money and . . .

HALDEMAN: Really?

DEAN: Oh yeh, he's . . .

PRESIDENT: It's a 120 thousand dollars. That's a lot Bob, which is easy, I mean it's not easy to deliver, but it's easy to get. Eh, now, ah, [9 seconds of silence] If that's the thing, if that, if that is the case, if it's just that way, then the thing to do is . . . to get, get the thing all thrashed out, if, if, for example, you said, look we're not, we're not going to continue -- and let's state frankly, to cut our losses. That's just one way you can do it. On the assumption that we are, we, by continuing to cut our losses, we're not going to win, that in the end we're going to be bled to death and it's all going to come out anyway. Then you've got the worst of both worlds, we're going to lose and people are going to tend . . .

HALDEMAN: look back over it . . .

PRESIDENT: And in effect, look like a cover-up. So that we can't do . . . Now if -- the other, the other, the other line, however, ah, if you, you take that line, that we're not going to continue to cut our losses, that means that then we have to look square in the eye as to what the hell those losses are, and see which people can, so we can avoid criminal liability. Right?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: And that means, that we, we've got to keep it off of you, ah Chuck, Chuck [inaudible] defense clearly; Herb and the obstruction of justice thing -- we've got to keep it off of Herb. We got to keep it naturally off of Bob. Off of Chapin, if possible. And Strachan. Right?

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: And Mitchell. Right?

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: Now --

HALDEMAN: And Magruder, if you can. That's just the way.

PRESIDENT: Magruder, Magruder, there's, John Dean's point is that Magruder just goes around telling everybody, "Look . . ."

HALDEMAN: That's my view.

PRESIDENT: Is it?

HALDEMAN: Yup. I think Jeb, I don't think he wants to, and I think he even would try not to. But I don't think he's able not to.

DEAN: I don't think he's strong enough when they're really rough.

[TALKING TOGETHER]

PRESIDENT: Another way to go at that Bob is to annex on to our position . . . , is to, ah, continue to try to cut our losses. Now we can look at that course of action: first, it's gonna require approximately a million dollars to take care of the jackasses that are in jail. And that can be, that can be arranged. That can be arranged. But you realize that after we're gone and assuming, incidentally, that they're going to crack, you know what I mean.

DEAN: Um, huh.

PRESIDENT: That would be an unseemly story. Eventually, all the people aren't going to care that much.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: People aren't going to care that much.

DEAN: How much history will pass on it . . .

PRESIDENT: That's what we're talking about, isn't that the, the question? And the second thing is, we're not going to be able to deliver on, on any kind of a, of a clemency thing. You know Colson has gone around on this clemency thing with Hunt and the rest.

DEAN: Hunt, Hunt is now talking in terms of being out by Christmas.

HALDEMAN: This year?

DEAN: This year. Ah, he was told by O'Brien who is my conveyor of doom back and forth, ah, that, ah, hell, he'd be lucky if he were out a year from now after the Ervin hearings were, well you know, over. He said, "how in Lord's name could you be commuted that quickly?" He said, "Well, that's my commitment from Colson."

HALDEMAN: By Christmas of this year?

DEAN: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: See, that's, that's really, that's very believable, because Colson . . .

PRESIDENT: Colson?

HALDEMAN: Colson is a, is a, that's, that's your fatal flaw, really, in Chuck is he is an operator in expediency, and he will say . . . at the time and where he is . . . whatever he has to, to accomplish what he's there to do.

DEAN: Right.

HALDEMAN: And that's, I, I would believe that he said that if that's what Hunt says that he has. I would believe he's capable of saying that.

PRESIDENT: The only thing you could do with him would be to parole him for a period of time because of his family situation. But you couldn't provide clemency.

DEAN: No, ah, uh, Kleindienst has now got control of the Parole Board, and he said now, now we can pull paroles off now where we couldn't before.

HALDEMAN: Kleindienst always tells you that but then never delivers.

PRESIDENT: Parole, let's talk [inaudible] about that. Parole, oh, I think in appearance and so forth is something that, I think in Hunt's case, you could do Hunt, but you couldn't do the others. You understand?

DEAN: Well, so much depends upon how Sirica sentences. He could sentence Hunt in a way that makes parole even impossible.

PRESIDENT: He can?

DEAN: Sure, he can do all kinds of permutations.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: Yeah, he can be a, just a son of a bitch as far as . . . the whole thing.

HALDEMAN: Can't you appeal on an unjust sentence as well as on an unjust . . . ?

DEAN: You have sixty days to ask the judge to review it. There's no appellate review of sentences.

HALDEMAN: There isn't?

DEAN: Not that I . . .

PRESIDENT: The judge can review it.

HALDEMAN: Only the sentencing judge can review it?

PRESIDENT: Coming back, though, to this. So you got that, the uh, hanging over. Now, If, uh, you see, if you let

it hang there, the point is, if you let all or only part. . . The point is, your feeling is that we just can't continue to, to pay the blackmail of these guys?

DEAN: I think that's our greatest jeopardy.

PRESIDENT: Now, let me tell you.

DEAN: That's the problem.

PRESIDENT: We could get the money. There is no problem in that. We can't provide the clemency. The money could be provided. Mitchell could provide the way to deliver it. That could be done. See what I mean?

HALDEMAN: Mitchell says he can't, doesn't he?

DEAN: Mitchell says that, uh, well, Mitchell that, you know, there has been an interesting thing, phenomena all the way along on this. There have been a lot of people having to pull oars and not everybody pulls them all the same time, the same way, because there develop self-interests.

HALDEMAN: What John is saying is, everybody smiles at Dean and says well you better get something done about it.

DEAN: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Mitchell is leaving Dean hanging out on him. None of us, well, maybe we are doing the same thing to you.

DEAN: That's right.

HALDEMAN: But let me say that. I don't see how there is any way that you can have the White House or anybody presently in the White House involved in trying to gin out this money.

DEAN: We are already deeply enough in that. That is the problem, Bob.

PRESIDENT: I thought you said we need more money.

DEAN: Well, in fact that, uh, when . . .

PRESIDENT: Kalmbach?

DEAN: Well, Kalmbach was a . . . No, but when they ran out of that money, as you know, they came after the 350 that was over here. . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: Uh, and I had to explain what it was for, uh, before I could get the money.

PRESIDENT: Well, you said.

DEAN: Now they . . .

HALDEMAN: They never, that was, that was in the first place, that was put back to LaRue.

DEAN: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Where it belonged. It wasn't all returned in a lump sum, it was put back in pieces.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Then LaRue used it for this other purpose?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Well . . .

HALDEMAN: And the balance was all returned to LaRue. The problem is that we don't have any receipts for that, we have no way of proving that.

DEAN: And, and I think, I think that was because, you know, self-interest over there. Mitchell was . . .

HALDEMAN: Mitchell told LaRue not take it at all.

DEAN: That's right.

HALDEMAN: That's what he told me.

DEAN: That's right and then don't give him a receipt.

PRESIDENT: Well then what happened? LaRue took it and then what?

DEAN: Well it was sent back to him because we just couldn't continue piecemeal giving, you know, I had to get . . . every time I asked for it I had to tell Bob I needed some or something like that and they had to get Gordon Strachan to go up to his safe and take it out and take it over to LaRue. This was just a forever operation.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible]

DEAN: [inaudible]

HALDEMAN: We had been trying to get a way to get that money back out of here anyway.

PRESIDENT: Sure.

HALDEMAN: And what this was supposed to be, was loans. This was immediate cash needs; this was going to be, re, replenished. And Mitchell was arguing, "You can't take the three-fifty back till it's all replenished." Isn't that right?

DEAN: That's right. Well you know we . . .

HALDEMAN: They hadn't replenished it, so we just gave it all back anyway.

PRESIDENT: I had a feeling we could handle this.

DEAN: Well, first of all, they'll have a hell of a time proving it for one thing. Ah, that's one thing. Uh,

PRESIDENT: I just have the feeling . . . Let's come back to the money, a million dollars, and so forth and so on. Let me say, I think you can get that in cash. I know money is hard to raise -- may have to use credit. But the point is, what would you do on that. Let's look at the hard . . .

DEAN: Well, that has been very interesting. That has been thus far the most difficult problem.

PRESIDENT: All right.

DEAN: That has been -- That's why these fellows have been on and off the reservation, all the way along.

PRESIDENT: So the hard place is this. Your, your feeling at the present time is, to hell with the million dollars. In other words, you say to these fellows, "I'm sorry, it's all off," and let them talk, right?

DEAN: Well . . .

HALDEMAN: That's, that's the way to do it. If you want to do it clean.

That's the way to do it. That's the way you can live with, because the problem with the blackmail, that's the thing we kept raising with you when you said there's a money problem and we need twenty thousand, or a hundred thousand or something, was "yeah, that's what you need today, but what do you need tomorrow and next year and five years from now?"

PRESIDENT: How long?

DEAN: Well, that was just to get us through November 7th, though.

HALDEMAN: I understand that, that's why we had to get by November 7th, there's no question.

DEAN: Because they could have sold; these fellows could have sold out to the Democrats for a half million.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] as far as that's concerned, as far as what happened, this. Our cover there has been the, the Cuban Committee. They [inaudible] the election.

DEAN: Well, yeah, but we can put that together. That isn't, of course, quite the way it happened, but uh . . .

PRESIDENT: I know. It's the way it's going to have to happen.

DEAN: It's going to have to happen.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Finally though, so you let it go, so what happens is, then they go out and they'll start blowing the whistle on everybody else, and what it really gets down to. . . So that, that would be the clean way. Right?

DEAN: Ah . . .

PRESIDENT: Is that really your, you, you really go so far as to recommend that?

DEAN: That, no I wouldn't. I don't think that, I don't think necessarily that's the cleanest way. One of the, I think that we all need to discuss is, is there some way that we can get our story before a grand jury and, so that they can . . . have really investigated the White House on this. And I must, I must be perfectly honest, I haven't really thought through that alternative. We've been, you've been so busy on . . .

PRESIDENT: The other?

DEAN: the other containment situation . . .

PRESIDENT: John Ehrlichman, of course, has raised the point of the other grand jury, I just don't know how you can do it. On what basis? I, I could call for it, but I . . .

DEAN: That would be, I would think

PRESIDENT: The President takes the lead. The difference is now in view of all this that blackmail and so forth. I understand this, but I, I think I want another grand jury proceeding. And we'll have the White House appear before that. Is that right, John?

DEAN: Um, huh.

PRESIDENT: That's the point you see. That would make a difference. I want everybody at the White House called. Then that, that gives you a reason not to have to go over before the Ervin Select Committee. It puts it in a, in an executive session in a sense, right?

DEAN: Right.

HALDEMAN: There'd be some rules of evidence, aren't there?

DEAN: There are rules of evidence.

PRESIDENT: You'd have rules, you'd have lawyers.

HALDEMAN: You're in a hell of a lot better position than you are right now.

DEAN: No, you can't have a lawyer before a grand jury.

PRESIDENT: Oh no.

DEAN: Can't have a lawyer before a grand jury.

HALDEMAN: But you, you do have rules of evidence; you can refuse to, to talk.

DEAN: You can take the Fifth Amendment.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: You can say you forgot too, can't you?

DEAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: But you can't. . . you have a very high risk of a perjury situation.

PRESIDENT: That's right. If you're asked, you just say, "I don't remember, I can't recall, I can't give an answer to that, that I can recall."

HALDEMAN: You have the same perjury thing on the Hill, don't you?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Oh, hell yes. And . . .

[two or more voices at the same time]

HALDEMAN: [inaudible] that's a hell of a lot worse to deal with.

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: The grand jury thing has its, uh, uh . . .
View this thing might, ah, . . . Suppose we had a
grand jury proceeding? Would that, would that?
What would that do to the Ervin thing -- would it
go right ahead?

DEAN: Probably.

HALDEMAN: If you do anything. . .

PRESIDENT: On that score, though, we have, let me just run by
the fact, if you do that in a grand jury, we could
then have a much better cause in terms of saying,
"Look, this is the grand jury in which the prosecu-
tors. . ." How about a special prosecutor? We
could use Petersen or use another one. You see, he's
probably suspect.

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Would you call in another prosecutor?

DEAN: I'd like to have Petersen on our side, advising us,
frankly.

PRESIDENT: Frankly. Well, Petersen's honest. There isn't
anybody about to question him is there?

DEAN: No, no but he'll get a barrage when, ah, the Watergate
hearings start.

PRESIDENT: Yes, but he can go up and say he's, he's been told to
go further in the grand jury, to go into this and
that and the other thing. Call everybody in the
White House. I want them to come, I want them to go
to the grand jury.

DEAN: This may result, this may happen even without our
calling for it when the, when these, ah . . .

PRESIDENT: Vesco?

DEAN: No, well that's one possibility. But also when these people go back before the grand jury here. They're going to pull all these criminal defendants back in before the grand jury and immunize them.

PRESIDENT: Uh, who is?

DEAN: The U.S. Attorney's Office will.

PRESIDENT: To do what?

DEAN: To talk about anything further they want to talk about.

PRESIDENT: What do they gain out of it?

DEAN: Nothing.

PRESIDENT: The hell with it.

DEAN: They're, they're gonna stone wall it, ah, as it now stands, but it could be Hunt. That's why, that's the logic of his threat.

HALDEMAN: This is Hunt's opportunity.

DEAN: This is Hunt's opportunity.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: In other words, he can lay the [inaudible].

PRESIDENT: That's right, that's why, that's why your immediate thing, you've got no choice with Hunt with a hundred and twenty or whatever it is. Right?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Would you agree that that's the buy time thing and you better damn well get that done.

DEAN: I think that he ought to be given some signal anyway to, to . . .

PRESIDENT: . . . Well for Christ's sake get it, in a way that, ah -- who, who's gonna talk to him? Colson? He's the one who is supposed to know him.

DEAN: Well Colson doesn't have any money though, that's the thing. That's, you know, one of the real problems.

They have been unable to raise any money. A million dollars in cash or, or the like has been just a very difficult problem, as we've discussed before. Apparently, Mitchell has talked to Pappas. I called him last, John asked me to call him last night after our discussion and after you'd met with John, to see where that was. And I, I said, "Have you talked to, to Pappas." He was at home and Martha picked up the phone, so it was all in code -- "did you talk to the Greek?" And he said, "Yes, I have." And I said, "Is the Greek bearing gifts?" He said, "Well, I want to call you tomorrow on that."

PRESIDENT: Well look, what is it that you need on that, ah, what ah, ah, I'm not familiar with the money situation.

DEAN: Well that's, you know it sounds easy to do, apparently, you know, until everyone's out there doing it, and that's where our breakdown has come every time.

PRESIDENT: Well if you had it, where would you, how would you get it to somebody?

DEAN: Well, there's ah -- I gather LaRue just leaves it in mailboxes and things like that, and tells Hunt to go pick it up. Someone phones Hunt and tells him to pick it up. As I say, we're a bunch of amateurs in that business.

HALDEMAN: That was the thing that we thought Mitchell ought to be able to know how to find somebody who could do all that sort of thing. Cause none of us know how to.

DEAN: That's right. You've got to wash money and all that sort, you know you can get a hundred thousand out of a bank and it all comes in serialized bills and --

PRESIDENT: I understand.

DEAN: That means you have to go to Vegas with it or a bookmaker in New York City and -- I've learned all these things after the fact. It's, ha, ha, great shape for the next time around.

[LAUGHTER]

HALDEMAN: Jesus.

PRESIDENT: The main point is now for the people to, uh, get the money together. Of course, you've got the surplus from the campaign. [inaudible] Is there any other money hanging around?

HALDEMAN: But what, what about, what about the money we moved back out of the, here?

DEAN: Apparently there's some there. That might be what they can use. Uh, I don't know how much is left.

PRESIDENT: Kalmbach must have some.

DEAN: Kalmbach doesn't have a cent.

PRESIDENT: He doesn't?

DEAN: There's a new law.

HALDEMAN: The 350 that we moved out was all we saved, because they were afraid to because of this. . . I mean, that's the trouble. We're so goddamn square it doesn't -- we'd get caught. I mean . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, could I suggest that at this point,. . . Now let me, let me, let me go back around [inaudible]

HALDEMAN: Be careful.

DEAN: Heh, heh.

HALDEMAN: The, uh, the grand jury thing has a feel . . .

PRESIDENT: Question is, it is better that we are cooperating with the grand jury?

DEAN: Once we, once we start down any route that involves the criminal justice system . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: You've got to have full appreciation that there is really no control over that.

PRESIDENT: No sir.

DEAN: Now, while we did a, we had an amazing job of . . .

PRESIDENT: I know.

DEAN: of keeping the thing on the track before . . .

PRESIDENT: Sure.

DEAN: while the FBI was out there all that and that was only because . . .

PRESIDENT: I know, I know.

DEAN: They found the way they were going.

PRESIDENT: Right, right. But you may have stopped it [inaudible] a lawyer. Let's take it to a grand jury. Eh, the new grand jury would call Magruder in, wouldn't it?

DEAN: Based on what information? For example, what happens if Dean goes in and gives a story, you know, that here is the way it all came about, it was supposed to be a legitimate operation and it obviously got off the track. I heard these horrors, told Haldeman that we shouldn't be involved in this.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, right.

DEAN: Then Magruder's going to have to be called in and questioned about all those meetings again, and the like. And it begins to again, it'll begin to change his story as to what he told to the grand jury the last time.

PRESIDENT: Well.

DEAN: That way he's into a perjury situation.

HALDEMAN: That, that's the best leverage you've got on Jeb. He's got to keep his story straight or he's in real trouble.

DEAN: That's right.

HALDEMAN: Unless, they get smart and give him immunity. If they immunize Jeb then you have an interesting problem.

PRESIDENT: He wouldn't want . . .

DEAN: Well, I think we, we have control, we have control over who is immunized.

HALDEMAN: Do we?

DEAN: Yeah. I think they wouldn't do that without our . . .

PRESIDENT: But you see, the grand jury proceeding [inaudible] I'm just thinking now how the President . . . We would be cooperating, we would be cooperating through the grand jury. Everybody goes down, that's the proper way to do this. It should be done through a grand jury, not up there in the kleig lights of the Committee or . . .

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Nobody's questioning this grand jury and so forth. So. And next we would insist on executive privilege before the Committee, flat out, state no, we won't do that, we're not going to disclose matters before a grand jury. And that's that, see?

HALDEMAN: All right, then you go to the next step. Would we then, the grand jury, does the grand jury meet in executive session?

DEAN: Yes sir, they're secret sessions, they're secret.

HALDEMAN: Secret sessions. Alright. Then would, would we agree to release our state. . . our grand jury transcripts?

DEAN: That's not, that's not, our, we don't have the authority to do that, that's up to the court, and the court thus far has not released the ones from the last grand jury.

PRESIDENT: They usually are not.

DEAN: It'd be highly unusual for a grand jury to come out.
What would, happens is . . .

HALDEMAN: A lot of the substance from the grand jury came out.

PRESIDENT: Leaks.

DEAN: Well, it came out of the U.S. Attorney's Office . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: more than the grand jury, we didn't, some of the
grand jurors may have leaked it, but they were . . .

PRESIDENT: Well, it's not so bad, not so bad, it's bad but it's
not the worst place.

HALDEMAN: Well, well, I was going the other way there. I was
going that it might be to your interest to get it out.

PRESIDENT: Well, we could easily do that. Leak out certain
stuff. We can pretty much control that. We've got
much more control over that. Now, the other
possibility is not to go to the grand jury, and
you've got three things: (1) you just say the hell
with it; we can't raise the money; sorry, Hunt, say
what you want, and so on. Most of it's all right.

DEAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: And if that happens, then that raises some
possibilities of other criminal . . . cause he's
likely to say a hell of a lot of things. He's
certain to get Magruder on it.

DEAN: It'll get Magruder. It'll start the whole FBI
investigation going again.

PRESIDENT: Yep. Well, it will, uh, it will get Magruder. It
could possibly get Colson if he's in any danger.

DEAN: That's right. It could get, uh, . . .

PRESIDENT: It could get Mitchell . . . maybe . . . no

HALDEMAN: Hunt can't get Mitchell.

DEAN: I don't think Hunt can get Mitchell. Hunt's got a lot of hearsay.

PRESIDENT: Ehrlichman? [inaudible]

HALDEMAN: He could on the other thing, he could [inaudible]

DEAN: Krogh, Krogh, could go down in smoke.

PRESIDENT: Does Krogh [inaudible]. On the other hand Krogh just says he was, ah -- Krogh says it was a national security matter. Is that what he says?

DEAN: Yeah, but that won't sell ultimately in a criminal situation. It may be mitigating on sentences, but it won't, ah -- in the main matter.

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] I've tried to take a look around the track. We have no choice on Hunt, but to try to keep . . .

DEAN: Right now we have no choice.

PRESIDENT: But, but my point is, do you ever have any choice on Hunt? That's the point. No matter what we do here now, John.

DEAN: Well . . .

PRESIDENT: Hunt, eventually, he's gonna get in it and so forth. He's gonna blow the whistle.

DEAN: What I've been trying to conceive of is how we could lay out everything we know in a way that, you know, we've told the grand jury or somebody else. So that if a Hunt blows . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: So what's new, you know, it's already been told to a grand jury and they've found no criminal liability and they've investigated it in full. We're sorry fellow. Ah, we don't, it doesn't . . .

PRESIDENT: [inaudible] You mean, Ehrlichman's use of Hunt on the other deal?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Do you throw that out?

DEAN: Ah, well Hunt will go to jail for that too. You've gotta understand that.

PRESIDENT: That's the point too. I don't think that. I wouldn't throw that out. I think I would limit it to. . . I don't think you need to go into every goddamn thing Hunt has done.

DEAN: No.

PRESIDENT: Some things in the national security area, yes sure, you . . .

HALDEMAN: We've already said that. Anyway, we've laid the groundwork for that.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: But here is my concern John before you go to that, let's go to the other stuff. The other, the other angle is to decide on whether to open up the grand jury versus the Committee that it won't be believed. And then you'll have two things, the grand jury and you have the other thing -- leaks. The grand jury appeals to me because in that one the President makes the move. All these charges have been bandied about, and so forth, and the best thing to do is . . . I have ordered, or I have asked the grand jury to look into any further charges. All charges that have been raised. That's the place to do it, and not before a Committee of Congress. Right?

DEAN: Um, hum.

PRESIDENT: Then, however, we may say [inaudible]. God we can't risk that or she'll break loose there. Then, that leads me to your third thing, the third thing is just to continue to . . .

DEAN: Hunker down and fight it.

PRESIDENT: Alright, if you hunker down and fight it, fight it, what happens. Your, your view is that, that is, is not really a viable option.

DEAN: It's a very, it's a high risk, very high risk.

PRESIDENT: High risk. Because your view of what will happen out of that is that it's gonna come out. Somebody's . . . Hunt. Something's gonna break loose.

DEAN: Somethin's gonna break . . .

PRESIDENT: And when it breaks, it's, will look like the President . . .

DEAN: is covering up.

PRESIDENT: has, has covered up a huge crisis.

DEAN: That's correct.

HALDEMAN: But you can't contain it, John.

PRESIDENT: And that's about [inaudible]

DEAN: I just, I just don't think

PRESIDENT: You, you have now moved away from the hunker down.

DEAN: Well, I've moved to the point where we've certainly got to take a, take a harder look at the other alternative, which we haven't before.

PRESIDENT: The other alternative appears . . .

DEAN: The other alternatives . . .

PRESIDENT: Really, we have other choices, wouldn't you say? As a matter of fact, there'd be a middle ground of grand jury and then there's finally the other ground of, now, I suppose there's a middle ground of . . .

DEAN: And I would . . .

PRESIDENT: middle ground of, of a public statement. Without the grand jury.

DEAN: What we need also, sir . . .

PRESIDENT: And also . . .

HALDEMAN: But John's view is that if we make the public statement . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: that we talked, everybody discussed this morning, that we talked about last night that each of us hunkers down. He says that will immediately lead to a grand jury.

PRESIDENT: Fine. All right, fine.

HALDEMAN: He says if we make that statement they'll have to call a grand jury. He says . . .

PRESIDENT: Maybe we can make the public statement before the grand jury, in order to . . .

HALDEMAN: So it looks like we're trying to do it over . . .

DEAN: Alright, say, alright, so here's the public statement, and we want, we want, uh . . .

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

DEAN: full grand jury investigations by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

PRESIDENT: It will be interesting to see whether the statements [inaudible]. That's right. It would have to be said that the reason that we had delayed this is until after the sentencing. And you see the point is, the reason that time is of the essence, we can't play around, they're going to sentence on Friday. We're gonna have to move the goddamn thing pretty fast. See what I mean?

DEAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: So we've gotta act, we really haven't time to . . .

DEAN: The other, the other thing is that the Attorney General could call Sirica and say that the Government has some major developments that it is considering and would you hold sentencing for two weeks. If we set ourselves on a course of action.

PRESIDENT OR HALDEMAN: Yup, yup.

DEAN: Say that sentencing may be in the wrong perspective right now, I don't know for certain, but I just think there're some things that, uh, I'm not at liberty to discuss with you, that I want to ask that the Court withhold two weeks sentencing.

HALDEMAN: So. Then the story is out, Sirica delays sentencing in Watergate --

DEAN: I think, I think that could be handled in a way between Sirica and Kleindienst that it would not get out.

PRESIDENT: Yup.

DEAN: Sirica tells me, I mean, Kleindienst apparently does have good rapport with Sirica. He's never talked to him since this case's developed, but . . .

PRESIDENT: Kleindienst could say that he's working on this matter, he'd like, he'd like to have a week. I wouldn't take two weeks, I would take a week . . .

DEAN: Now I'll tell you the person that I would, you know, I feel that, we, we could use his counsel on this, because he understands the criminal process better than anybody over here does.

PRESIDENT: Petersen?

DEAN: Is Petersen. It's awkward for Petersen. He's the head of the Criminal Division, but to discuss some of these things with him, we may well want to remove him

from the head of the Criminal Division and say,
"Related to this case, you'll have no relation."
Give him on some special assignment over here where
he can sit down and say, yes, this is, this is an
obstruction but it couldn't be proved. Or so on,
so forth. Now, we almost need him out of there to
take his counsel, that would, uh, I don't think he'd
want that, but, uh, he is the most knowledgeable . . .

PRESIDENT: How would you get him out?

DEAN: I think an appeal directly to Henry, uh, that, uh...

PRESIDENT: Uh, what if the President did it, could, could the
President call him in as Special Counsel to the
White House, uh, to the White House, for the purpose
of conducting an investigation, represent. . . , uh,
rather than a Dean.

DEAN: I've thought of that, I've thought of that.

PRESIDENT: Having him as Special Counsel to represent him in
the grand jury, correct?

DEAN: That is one possibility.

PRESIDENT: Yep.

HALDEMAN: On the basis that Dean has now become a principal
rather than, uh [inaudible]

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: And he's. . .

DEAN: And I could recommend that to you.

PRESIDENT: You could recommend it, you could recommend it and
Petersen could come over and be the, ah. . . and I'd
say now --

HALDEMAN: Petersen's planning to leave anyway.

DEAN: Is he?

PRESIDENT: and I say now I want you to get, we want you, we'd say to Petersen, "we want you to get to the bottom of this goddamn thing; call another grand jury and anything else." Correct? Well now, we've got to know whether Kleindienst can get Sirica to put it off, right? [inaudible] And second, you've got to get Mitchell down here; you and Ehrlichman and Mitchell and let's -- by tomorrow.

HALDEMAN: Why don't we do that tonight?

PRESIDENT: I don't think we can get him that soon, can we, John? It would be helpful if you could.

DEAN: I think it would be. If we could get him to come down this afternoon.

PRESIDENT: It would be very helpful to get it going and, ah, you know, ah, and, then, ah, actually, ah, I'm perfectly willing to meet with the group or, I don't know whether --

HALDEMAN: Do you think you want to?

PRESIDENT: and maybe have Dean report to me at the end as to whether, as to what conclusion, etcetera, is going to be. I think I need to stay away from the Mitchell side of it at this point. Do you agree?

DEAN: Um huh.

PRESIDENT: And ah --

DEAN: And I think unless we see, you know, some sort of reluctant dragon there.

HALDEMAN: If you're gonna meet with the rest of us, I'm not sure you'd want to meet with John [inaudible].

PRESIDENT: All right, fine, and, ah, my point is that, ah, we can, ah, you may, well, I think it's good frankly to consider these various options. Once you, once you decide on a plan. John, you had the right plan, you say, no doubts about the right plan before the election. And you handled it just right, you contained it. Now after the election we've got to have another plan because we can't have for four years, we can't have this thing eating away. We can't do it.

DEAN: Well there's been a change of mood . . .

HALDEMAN: John's point is exactly right -- that the erosion here now is costly to you and that is the thing you've got to turn off at whatever the cost. We've got to figure out where to turn it off at the lowest cost we can, at whatever cost.

DEAN: That's it, that's what we have to do.

PRESIDENT: Well, the erosion is inevitably gonna come here. Apart from anything, you know, people saying that, well, Watergate is a major concern. It isn't. It will, it will be. It's bound to be.

DEAN: We cannot let you be tarnished by that situation.

PRESIDENT: Well I think that [inaudible] would be helpful. I have a lot bigger fish to fry . . . neglecting the great efforts by the White House are we not . . . we don't, uh . . . I say that the White House can't do it. Right?

HALDEMAN: Yup.

DEAN: That's right.