AMBROSE/NIXON TAPES COLLECTION

(Mss 231)

Inventory

Earl K. Long Library
University of New Orleans

April 2000

Contents

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Summary

Size: Photocopies of 84 transcripts

Geographic Locations: Washington, D.C.

Inclusive Dates: March 23, 1971 - June 4, 1973

Bulk Dates: 1973

Summary: Transcripts of conversations recorded on White House tapes during the Nixon Administration (1969-1974), from Watergate Special Prosecution Force File in the National Archives; used by Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose in research for his biography of President Richard M. Nixon.

Related Collections: Ambrose/Nixon Collection (Mss 180); Ambrose/Nixon Collection, Addendum 1 (Mss 205)

Source: Gift, 1991
Historical Note

Watergate is the popular name for the political scandal and constitutional crisis that began with the arrest (June 17, 1972) of five burglars who broke into DEMOCRATIC National Committee headquarters at the Watergate office building in Washington, D.C. It ended with the resignation (August 9, 1974) of President Richard M. Nixon.

The burglars and two co-plotters--G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt--were indicted (September 1972) on charges of burglary, conspiracy, and wiretapping. Four months later, they were convicted and sentenced to prison terms by District Court Judge John J. Sirica, who was convinced that pertinent details had not been unveiled during the trial and proffered leniency in exchange for further information. As it became increasingly evident that the Watergate burglars were tied closely to the Central Intelligence Agency and the Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP), some of Nixon's aides began talking to federal prosecutors.

The defection of aides such as Jeb Stuart Magruder, assistant to CRP director John N. Mitchell, quickly implicated others in Nixon's inner circle. The Senate established (February 1973) an investigative committee headed by Sen. Sam Ervin, Jr., to look into the growing scandal. Amid increasing disclosures of White House involvement in the Watergate break-in and its aftermath, Nixon announced the resignations of John Ehrlichman and H. R. Haldeman, two of his closest advisors, and the dismissal of his counsel John W. Dean III.

Growing suspicion of presidential involvement in the scandal resulted in an intensification of the investigation. Leaders in this inquiry included Judge Sirica, reporters for the Washington Post, the Ervin committee, and Archibald Cox, who was sworn in as special prosecutor in May 1973. Dean told the Ervin committee in June that Nixon had known of the cover-up. A month later, former White House staff member Alexander Butterfield revealed that Nixon had secretly tape-recorded conversations in his offices. Both Cox and the Ervin committee began efforts to obtain selected tapes. Nixon, citing executive privilege, refused to relinquish them and tried to have Cox fired. On October 20, 1973, Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson, refusing to dismiss Cox, resigned in protest. His deputy, William Ruckelshaus, also refused and was fired. Nixon's solicitor general, Robert H. Bork, who was next in command, then fired Cox. The "Saturday night massacre," as the events of that evening became known, heightened suspicions that Nixon had much to hide.
Leon Jaworski, who replaced Cox as special prosecutor on November 1, continued to press for the tapes. On March 1, 1974, a federal grand jury indicted seven men, including Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Mitchell, and White House special counsel Charles Colson, for conspiracy to obstruct justice. At the same time, the House Judiciary Committee began investigating the Watergate affair and related matters.

The president released (April 30) edited transcripts—containing suspicious gaps—of Watergate-related Oval Office conversations. Not satisfied, Judge Sirica subpoenaed additional tapes. When Nixon refused, the case moved to the Supreme Court, which ruled (July 24) against him by an 8-0 vote. The Court conceded that a president could withhold national security material but insisted that Watergate was a criminal matter.

On July 27-30, the House Judiciary Committee, whose public hearings had disclosed evidence of illegal White House activities, recommended that Nixon be impeached on three charges: obstruction of justice, abuse of presidential powers, and trying to impede the impeachment process by defying committee subpoenas. The committee rejected two other possible counts: Nixon's unauthorized, secret bombing of Cambodia in 1969 and his use of public funds to improve his private property.

A beleaguered President Nixon released three tapes to the public on August 5, 1974. One revealed that he had taken steps to thwart the FBI's inquiry into the Watergate burglary. The tape made it clear that Nixon had been involved actively in the cover-up from its beginnings. These disclosures destroyed the president's remaining congressional support. With House impeachment inevitable and Senate conviction probable, Richard Nixon became (August 9, 1974) the first U.S. chief executive to resign.

James T. Patterson

For Further Reading

Kutler, Stanley I. *The Wars of Watergate* (1990)
Lukas, J. Anthony. *Nightmare* (1976)
Sirica, John. *To Set the Record Straight* (1979)

Series, Subseries, and Descriptions

Series I. Notes

Explanatory notes which accompany the transcripts described below; commentary by Stephen E. Ambrose.

Series II. Transcripts

Transcripts of conversations recorded on White House tapes during the Nixon Administration, from Watergate Special Prosecution Force File in the National Archives

Container List

Series I. Notes

231-1 Explanatory notes issued by the Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, Office of Presidential Libraries, National Archives and Records Administration, to accompany the aforecited transcripts of Watergate tapes.


Series II. Transcripts (see itemized list, following):

1971, March 23, 10:16-10:19 A.M, through 1973, February 27, 3:55-4:20 P.M.

231-2 Transcripts (see itemized list, following):


231-3 Transcripts (see itemized list, following):

1973, April 15, 10:35-11:15 A.M, through 1973, April 25, 11:06 A.M.-1:55 P.M.

231-4 Transcripts (see itemized list, following):

1973, April 25, 4:40-5:30 P.M, (e.i. [sic] 5:35 P.M.) through 1973, June 4, 10:05-10:20 P.M.
Itemized List

1971

March 23, 10:16-10:19 A.M. participants: President Nixon, Stephen B. Bull

March 23, 10:35-11:25 A.M. participants: President Nixon, Clifford M. Hardin, J. Phil Campbell, Dairy Industry Representatives

March 23, 5:05-5:38 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Clifford M. Hardin, J. Phil Campbell, George P. Schultz, John D. Ehrlichman, John C. Whitaker, Donald B. Rice, John B. Connally, William Fitz-Patrick

April 19, 3:03-3:34 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, George P. Schultz, Stephen B. Bull

April 19, 3:04-3:09 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Richard G. Kleindeinst (telcon)

April 21, 4:18-6:13 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John N. Mitchell

May 5, 9:35-10:15 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

July 6, 11:47 A.M.-12:45 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John N. Mitchell, John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. Haldeman


October 8, 10:04-10:46 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John N. Mitchell, John D. Ehrlichman, Stephen B. Bull

October 25, 12:35-2:05 P.M. participants: President Nixon,
1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>11:50 A.M.-12:15 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>1:30-2:30 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Charles W. Colson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>2:20-3:30 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, Charles W. Colson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>10:04-11:39 A.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Ronald L. Ziegler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>1:04-1:13 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>2:20-2:45 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Ronald L. Ziegler</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>12:57-2:10 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>5:27-6:17 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John W. Dean III, Stephen B. Bull</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>5:27-6:17 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John W. Dean III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>[unknown]</td>
<td>Charles W. Colson, E. Howard Hunt (telcon/DB)</td>
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</table>

1973

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 4,</td>
<td>[after 5:14-5:50 P.M.]</td>
<td>President Nixon, Charles W. Colson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>4:05-5:34 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 13, 9:48-10:52 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Charles W. Colson

February 14, 10:13-10:49 A.M. participants: President Nixon, Charles W. Colson, Stephen B. Bull, Manolo Sanchez

February 14, 5:34-6:00 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman

February 16, 9:08-9:38 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Louis Patrick Gray III

February 23, 9:35-10:05 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Stephen B. Bull

February 23, 10:08-10:52 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Richard G. Kleindeinst

February 27, 3:55-4:20 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, Stephen B. Bull

February 28, 9:12-10:23 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, Stephen B. Bull

March 1, 9:18-9:46 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, Manolo Sanchez

March 8, 9:51-9:54 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III

March 13, 12:42-2:00 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John W. Dean III, Manolo Sanchez

March 17, 1:25-2:10 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, H. R. Haldeman

March 20, 10:47 A.M.-12:10 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

[i.e, unknown between 10:47 and 11:40 A.M.]
March 20, 6:00-7:10 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

March 20, 7:29-7:43 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, White House operator

March 21, 10:12-11:55 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, H. R. Haldeman, Stephen B. Bull

March 21, 5:20-6:01 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

March 21, 7:53-8:24 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Charles Colson, White House operator (telcon)

March 22, 9:11-10:35 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

March 22, 1:57-3:43 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III, John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. Haldeman, John N. Mitchell

March 27, 11:10 A.M.-1:30 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Ronald L. Ziegler

March 30, 12:02-12:18 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Ronald L. Ziegler, John D. Ehrlichman

April 12, 7:31-7:48 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Charles W. Colson

April 14, 8:55-11:31 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 14, 1:55-3:55 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Ronald L. Ziegler, John D. Ehrlichman, Manolo Sanchez
April 14, 5:15-6:45 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 14, 11:02-11:16 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

April 14, 11:22-11:53 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman

April 15, 10:35-11:15 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Manolo Sanchez

April 15, 3:27-3:44 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, White House operator (telcon)

April 16, 10:00-10:40 A.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Stephen B. Bull

April 16, 10:50-11:04 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 16, 12:00-12:31 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

April 16, 3:27-4:04 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John Ehrlichman, Ronald L. Ziegler

April 16, 4:07-4:35 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John W. Dean III

April 17, 9:47-9:59 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Rose Mary Woods

April 17, 12:35-2:20 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Ronald L. Ziegler

April 17, 3:50-4:35 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Ronald L. Ziegler

April 17, 5:20-7:14 P.M. participants: President Nixon,
April 18, 3:05-3:23 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman (2 copies)

April 19, 9:31-10:12 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 19, 10:12-11:07 A.M. participants: President Nixon, Henry A. Petersen

April 19, 1:03-1:30 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman

April 19, 3:45-5:00 P.M. participants: President Nixon, Richard A. Moore

April 19, 4:50-? P.M. participants: John D. Ehrlichman, Herbert W. Kalmbach (telcon/DB)

April 19, 5:15-5:45 P.M. participants: President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, Manolo Sanchez

April 19, 9:37-9:53 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, White House operator (telcon)

April 20, 8:15-8:39 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

April 20, 11:07-11:23 A.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman

April 20, 12:16-12:34 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 25, 11:06 A.M.-1:55 P.M. participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman

April 25, 4:40-5:30 P.M. (e.i, participants: President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, Thomas [sic] 5:35 P.M.) Hart
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>6:57-7:14 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman (telcon)</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>7:17-7:19 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman (telcon)</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>7:25-7:39 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, White House operator (telcon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>7:46-7:53 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, White House operator (telcon)</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>8:55-10:24 A.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>3:59-9:03 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, Ronald L. Ziegler,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Stephen B. Bull, Manolo Sanchez</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>[unknown</td>
<td>President Nixon, John W. Dean III, Stephen B. Bull</td>
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<td></td>
<td>between 10:16</td>
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<td>A.M. and 9:54</td>
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<td>P.M.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>10:05-10:20 P.M.</td>
<td>President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, White House operator (telcon)</td>
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**Index Terms**

Ambrose, Stephen E.  
Nixon, Richard M.  
United States—Politics and government—1945-1974  
Watergate Affair, 1972-1974—Sources