

WATERGATE - Trial conversation tapes

Source: <https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/watergate-trial-tapes>

OVERVIEW

The Watergate Trial Conversations are excerpted Nixon White House tape conversations that were played in open court in U.S. v. Mitchell, et al. and U.S. v. Connally. The segments are a portion of the approximately 60 hours of tape subpoenaed by the Watergate Special Prosecution Force (WSPF).

These conversations include the segments referred to as the "Smoking Gun" and "Cancer on the Presidency."

DATE: Friday, June 23, 1972

Conversation Number: 741-2

Location: White House Oval Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 1 - U.S. v. John B. Connally, et al.

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 2 Segment 1 (8 minutes) |

[exhibit_01.pdf](#)

Abstract:

"The **Smoking Gun**" conversation:

Haldeman and Nixon discuss the progress of the FBI's investigation especially the tracing of the source of money found on the burglars. They propose having the CIA ask the FBI to halt their investigation of the Watergate break-in by claiming that the break-in was a national security operation.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 2 Segment 2 (4 minutes) |

[exhibit_02.pdf](#)

Conversation Number: 741-10

Location: White House Oval Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 2 - *U.S. v. John N. Mitchell, et al.*

Abstract:

A discussion of how Hunt's involvement in the Watergate break-in would point the investigators to the CIA, and potentially, Hunt's role in the Bay of Pigs debacle.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 2 Segment 3 (6 minutes) |

[exhibit_03.pdf](#)

Conversation Number: 343-36

Location: Old Executive Office Building Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 3 - *U.S. v. John N. Mitchell, et al.*

Abstract:

Haldeman discusses his meeting with Vernon Walters, Deputy Director of the CIA and an earlier phone call from L. Patrick Gray, the Acting FBI Director to Walters regarding the Watergate break-in investigation.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman

DATE: Wednesday, March 21, 1973

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 7 Segment 1 (37 minutes) |

[exhibit_12.pdf](#)

Conversation Number: 886-8

Location: White House Oval Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 12 - *U.S. v. John N. Mitchell, et al.*

- Exhibit 12 continues onto Reference Cassette Numbers E - 8 and E - 9

Abstract:

The "**Cancer on the Presidency**" conversation:

Dean recaps the history of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up for the President. They guess at who was responsible for setting the break-in in motion. Dean tells the President that the cover-up is "a cancer on the Presidency" that must be excised or his Presidency would be in danger. Also discussed: references to blackmail, perjury; discussion of paying the burglars off with one million dollars.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman
- John W. Dean III

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 8 Segment 1 (3 minutes) |

[exhibit_12.pdf](#)

Conversation Number: 886-8

Location: White House Oval Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 12 continued - *U.S. v. John N. Mitchell, et al.*

- Continued from E - 7, Exhibit 12 concludes on Reference Cassette Number E - 9

Abstract:

The "**Cancer on the Presidency**" conversation: Dean recaps the history of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up for the President. They guess at who was responsible for setting the break-in in motion. Dean tells the President that the cover-up is "a cancer on the Presidency" that must be excised or his Presidency would be in

danger. Also discussed: references to blackmail, perjury; discussion of paying the burglars off with one million dollars.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman
- John W. Dean III

Cassette Number / Minutes: E - 9 Segment 1 (43 minutes) |

[exhibit_12.pdf](#)

Conversation Number: 886-8

Location: White House Oval Office

Exhibit Number: Exhibit 12 continued - *U.S. v. John N. Mitchell, et al.*

- Continued from Reference Cassette Numbers E - 7 and E - 8

Abstract:

The "Cancer on the Presidency" conversation: Dean recaps the history of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up for the President. They guess at who was responsible for setting the break-in in motion. Dean tells the President that the cover-up is "a cancer on the Presidency" that must be excised or his Presidency would be in danger. Also discussed: references to blackmail, perjury; discussion of paying the burglars off with one million dollars.

Participants:

- President Nixon
- H.R.Haldeman
- John W. Dean III