

Nixon and John Dean, Telephone

April 17, 1973 9:19-9:25 a.m.

1 Voice: Conversation number thirty eight dash (-) eighty four. (0.2) Portion? of [0.0]
2
3 a telephoon conversation between the Presidint? ·h en Joh:n W. Dean
4
5 the Third. ·hh These portions uwere recorded on April seventeenth ·hhh
6
7 nineteen sevendy three ·hh between nine ninetee:n ·h en nine twunty five
8
9 a.m.u (0.4) The following? is segment one.u
10
11 (6.0) ((dead tape))
12
13 Nixon: 'Lo:ih
14
15 (1.2)
16
17 Nixon: Hello,
18
19 ((pt-tup pt-tup))
20
21 Op: Mi[s' Dea]n?
22 []
23 Nixon: [Yah<]
24
25 Dean: Yes↓sir.
26
27 Nixon: hHi John yih got yer uh piece=paper yer?
28
29 (0.3)
30
31 Dean: ¹ Ah: which one uz that no:w. Oh yes. I: work' with Len Garmenthh ah::
32
33 en Len I think hath a product thet (·) he in I kincur ↓in:.
34
35 Nixon: Oh I ↓see yah. Yah.↓ I got l:Linda: g^hot something to me las' night.=
36
37 Dean: Yaw.=
38
39 Nixon: =·hh[hhh
40 []
41 Dean: [En uh he en I,

41

¹ Leonard Garment had been one of Nixon's associates at the law firm Nixon Mudge. He then served in Nixon's White House as special consultant on domestic policy from 1969 to 1974. In the wake of the Watergate scandal, Garment filled the role of Counsel to the President. (From the bio-blurb for Garment's book, *In Search of Deep Throat*). Lukas (pp.441-442) mentions that by April 17, 1973, Garment "had taken over much of [John] Dean's legal work".

1 Nixon: =B[ut that's uh:
2 []
3 Dean: [()]
4 [— (0.7) —]
5 Nixon: Theh that's: whatchu would d uh [((swallow))] ·t ↓uhhhhehh ·hehh that's that's
6
7 the one you would ↓uh:hhyou would app↓rove.h=
8
9 Dean: =è-[Ah:m
10 []
11 Nixon: [hhi-
12
13 Nixon: his approach?=or dih you have any:hhihh=
14
15 Dean: =We[:ll?
16 []
17 Nixon: [ennuh- any uh: variāshins?=
18
19 Dean: =I wouldduhh hē-↓uh:::hh
20
21 Nixon: ·hhh W'l lemme see (does)//
22
23 (5.0) ((dead tape))
24
25 Voice: This c'nclude' segment one.h of conversation number thirdy eight (·) dash (·)
26
27 eighdy four.
28
29 (10.0)
30
31 Voice: The following*j* is segment two.: of conversation number thirdy eight (·)
32
33 dash eighdy four. (0.2) Portion? of a telephone conversation ·h buhtween
34
35 the President? ·h en Joh:n W. Dean the third. ·hhh This por:tion? was
36
37 recordid on April seventeenth ·hh nineteen sevendy three, ·hh buhtween
38
39 ni:ne nineteen ·hh en nine twunty fi:ve a.m.
40
41 (5.8) ((dead tape))
42
43 ((tlk))
44
45 Nixon: two thirdy er three ah'll geev yih=ri:n:g. ·hehh <eh:: en:d uh ah wunnuh
46
47 read the thing 'nd uh↓:r ehmd uh 'n then I then there's 'n↓ one ↓other
48
49 possible approach 'n, g[itcher] juh-
50 []
51 Dean: [Good]
52
53 Nixon: gitcher judgm'n on um.

- 1 Dean: A'right I'm available,
2
- 3 Nixon: _____ •very helpful I mean uh
4 |
5 (0.3) ((blk-klk-[tuk])
6 | [I mean I sɪh- uh ·hihhh ↓thē uh, end uhhh (0.3) I sut
7 Nixon: _____ [I mean I sɪh- uh ·hihhh ↓thē uh, end uhhh (0.3) I sut
8
9 2 uh I w'z out with uh (·) ·t·hehh (0.5) uh:hm (0.4) ·p ↓°I talk' t' Bill Rogers
10
11 too so wi'r tryin' duh
12
- 13 Dean: (sort it [out)
14 |
- 15 Nixon: [git theh ·hehhh Ez you kno:w the approach: kin very er depends
16
17 _____ un how we handle it thet's the main thi[ng,
18 | [(hhhhh[hh)
19 (Ø): (0.3) [(hhhhh[hh)
20 | [·t·hehh En awl en awl
21 Nixon: _____ [·t·hehh En awl en awl
22
23 _____ handle it 'n a way thet uh
24 |
25 (1.0) ((·pt-m ·pt pt-kuh-plk))=
26 | =↓uh: thet uhh ·hehhhh thet uh:h differentiates between:h the whole
27 Nixon: _____ =↓uh: thet uhh ·hehhhh thet uh:h differentiates between:h the whole
28
29 situation yih know.
30
31 (·)
32
- 33 Dean: Hm hm,
34
- 35 Nixon: Ez it's ezzuh ez it (·) ezzit< (0.2) eh ezzit mus' depending upon what
36
37 ·hehhhhh what developments are hmhhh ·pt·hehh ↓But uh:mhhh (·) I see thē
38
39 uh (1.2) ·pt ·huhh Butchee you you would gen'r'lly say: uh John thetchu
40
41 3 think though the Garment approach is the best ren.
42
- 43 Dean: _____ I think that at thih- thit this poi:nt is:
44 |
45 () : (0.3) hhhh

45

² **William Rogers**, Nixon's Secretary of State until he was replaced by Henry Kissinger on August 22nd, 1973. Lukas (p.441) remarks about April 14-17 (which he refers to as "these critical ides of April) "One man Nixon did seek out several times that week was Secretary of State Rogers, an old friend whose judgment Nixon obviously respected. On Monday evening [April 16] Nixon and Rogers dined together on the Presidential yacht while Nixon outlined the situation 'with the bark off'."

³ In standard orthography, "best ren" would be "best one".

- 1 Dean: ___ is is [good.=(Y[e s] thē)
2 []
3 Nixon: [·hehh [See the]problem we've got ez (far eth gamruh) thing
4
5 en so forth I had'n taw:ng talk with Petersin in hē'ss: è-hehh ·hehhh
6
7 very reluctin' tih have anythin:g said< at this point yih see ·hehh cuz
8
9 they haven't=
10
11 Dean: =Ca:se ↓(f[leed)
12 []
13 Nixon: [Uh?
14
15 Dean: It hurts his ceurss.
16
17 (·)
18
19 Nixon: Whath
20
21 Dean: It hurt[s his cas[e.
22 []
23 Nixon: [·h [eeYa:h. Well, it- èsee it thih Magru↓der. Uh eh:: Magru↓der
24
25 apart from their talks with yer people they uh=it's (·) Ma°gruder that
26
27 [they°
28 []
29 Dean: [Understa[:nd.
30 []
31 Nixon: [·hh they 'ev'n got anything there en uh ·hehh hI'm uhh He
32
33 doesn't tell me (·) not t' say somethin:' I said now look °here I've godda
34
35 gid° out here, ·hehhhhh What is you evvuh what w'l °↑you ↓do.h Yih jis'
36
37 geh out° ↓'n hdo it? Yih thee I dih- I jis(0.3)t can't ·hehhhh take th'
38
39 responsibìdih dih have< I don't think Peter↓sin would.=b't↓ some guy
40
41 down the uh ('ttorney's offih') sid well the Pres'ent blew the case in order
42
43 duh mh get publiciety.
44
45 (0.2)
46
47 Nixon: Yeh know
48
49 (): ·huhh
50
51 Dean: °↑Well I duh=I° don't know that yee- I don't know that it uh:↓:
52
53 (1.1)

1 Nixon: Not blew the case but but imp^haired it che ↓kno:[h.h
2 [
3 Dean: [Right. Ri[ght,
4 [
5 Nixon: [·hhhh
6 [
7 Nixon: °What g'd be yer reaction a' tha'° hmh[h
8 [
9 Dean: [Uh:: let me get s' more
10 [
11 in[formation for you aw:n that pō[tential.
12 [[
13 Nixon: [°·hehhh° [
14 [
15 (([kank))
16 Nixon: ·hehh Wouldje do that,=
17 [
18 Dean: =Yes [ah wī:ll.
19 [
20 Nixon: [·hhh<
21 [
22 Nixon: That's a thing that I think is very import'n here becuz uh hihh ·hehhh 'mean
23 [
24 I could iv said something Mondee in I talk' tuh Petersin en 'ee sid I'd prefer
25 [
26 4 not chiknowh<

26

⁴ In a telephone conversation on Sunday, April 15, 1973 [Casette 254 Call (8)Nixon Petersen:April 15 1973 11:45-11:53 pm] pages 1-3, Nixon asks Petersen, re Dean:

Nixon: Now: uh ah wunnuh ask yer: judgm'nt on that I kin:hh hI kin bring 'im in in the
mor:ning in tell um look (0.4) I wantcher: h-hh! resigna↓tion but uh: dihyou (·)
what- what whaddiyou want me d' do I don' wanna innerfere with yer (·) process.
Peters: Mister Pris'd'nt I don't think, that we ought to to: um
Nixon: tip ar hand?
Peters: ·h act yet.
(·)
Peters: ih-He is the first one who's ↑really c'm i:n.uh
(0.6)
Nixon: ·t Oh I see.
Nixon: I don't want any,h·hhh any: question thet's uh:·hhhh [fact thet- (·) thet I]'m:=
Peters: [(Y's I agre-:)]
Nixon: [way ahead a' the(p) yihknow I wanta stay o:ne:: step >ahead a' the curve.=
Peters: [()]
Nixon: =Yihknow what ah mea[n]?< [·lthrp·hhhhh
Peters: [I un[dersta:nd,
Nixon: ↓So: uh:↓ ·shha if you think uh:: on Dea:n, ·t·hhhh
Peters: I think we otuh hold the li:ne.
(·)
Nixon: A'right. En you'll let me kno↓:w.=th[et thet- eh]:- (·) e z s]oon ez eh soon=
Peters: [Y e s sir] I will indeed.]
Nixon: =ez uh,hhe::eh eh: 'n ne:n,hh ah:'ll (0.2) call 'im in:naturee hi'll heftuh resi::gn.
·h[hh·hhh
Peters: [Yes sir

1 Dean: Mmhm=
 2
 3 Nixon: ='mber ·hehh 'member we were t^halkin' about hmhh [(·)] ·hyuhh resignation=
 4 []
 5 (([ptk]))
 6
 7 Nixon: =en all that sorta thin:g en uh hen:d he said no? R'member I told ↑ju e[n eh=
 8 []
 9 Dean: [Yeh
 10
 11 Nixon: =·hehhhhh hand I sid alright now look ↑here I:'ve uhh I jus:t c-can't hnhh
 12
 13 (0.4) k-be in that uh ·hehhyah hI mean I, I can't be in a puhsition a' that.=
 14
 15 ⁵ 'ee says well a' decision is yers Mister Presid'n I say wehhll ·h let me tell
 16
 17 yih ·hhh what's the effect ↓ on it. I said ↓ what's th' situ^oashin. [·hehhhhhhh]
 18 [— (0.9) —]
 19 (·) ↑So::·hhhI don' kno:w·hmhh whatcher (·) We don' have any ·h Well look.=
 20

20

⁵ In the Sunday, April 15th conversation, Petersen comes close to this sort of statement (see arrowed line in the following fragment). Immediately following their discussion of Dean's resignation Nixon asks whether Haldeman and Ehrlichman should resign "before" their testimony is heard by the grand jury (pp. 4-5):

Nixon: deeyou think we should move on them buhfore ↓er deeyou wanna think
 ðv'r fer that over[night.
 Peters: [Wē'd like tuh waiTh
 (·)
 Peters: Wi'd like tuh wait.
 Nixon: °·h[·h°
 Peters: [Mister Pr[esid'n
 Nixon: [Becuz like tihday you were siggesting that we sh'd call um all in
 ↓in[:: have'm ha'm resi::gn yih see.=So I: I yish wantuh be sure yih didn't think=
 Peters: [(Right)
 Nixon: =I sh'd do ↓that.
 (0.5)
 Nixon: Cuz I per'cly prepared ↓to.
 (·)
 Peters: We:ll if=You knowaheh::<
 (·)
 Nixon: [hmhhhhh][hh
 → Peters: [() (0.3) [↓ahh ahaa:-·h That's really yer judgem'n hI think ultimately
 thet's gonna haf to be done.uh
 Nixon: Yaghh but what (·) butcher point is thet ·hehh iz far ez the case is c'ncern'
 yer telling me no:w thet it's bes:t tuh wait,
 (0.2)
 Nixon: hIs tha[t the point?]
 Peters: [Awn Dea]n? a:nd and yes: en on u-Ehrlichminu hHa:lde[min
 [((tk))
 (·)
 Peters: tuh::uh:r uh (0.8) uh::[:: I s'poze until we hear ther
 Nixon: [hmh hmhhh
 (0.6)
 (Nixon): ·p:t=
 Peters: =ther testimony

- 1 Nixon: =hh[h h h h h h
2 [
- 3 Dean: [>I'm g'nna get s'm in[<
4 [
- 5 Nixon: [Think about it we don't haf↓tuh:: ·p· we don'
6
7 haftuh do a thing dihdā:y.↓h ·he[hhh
8 [
- 9 Dean: [↓Mmhm=
10
- 11 Nixon: =↓Uh:: becuz Magruh- They they don't think it- they're gonna have (gahnna rep
12
13 un I hef) (·) Theh won't hev Ma↓gruder dihdāy they said °they [can't] get 'im,°↓
14 []
15 Dean: ° [Right,]°
16
- 17 Nixon: ·hehhhh ↓hAnd uh prob'ly not til duh↓morrowihhh ·hehh That'll be their fir:?
18
19 star witness
20
- 21 Dean: Mmhm,
22
- 23 Nixon: ·pt I mee ah- you know their pruhcedure there apperently is tih have him go out
24
25 'n ·plk (0.3) m-make a statem'nt 'n uh ·huhhhh in open courth °·hh·hh° (0.3)
26
27 huh:hh confess in open court 'n make a statemint apperently I didn' know they:
28
29 c'd do that with the guild[y people]
30 []
- 31 Dean: [Oh that's] becuz Sirica's insisting uh pon it
32
- 33 (): ↓m_{gh}
34
- 35 Dean: They're not ri[()]
36 []
- 37 Nixon: [Yè-eh-yah we- Tha]t's what they said.=thèh Sirica w'z ·hehhhh
38
39 h↓uh w'z uh: asking uhh th't Siruh skood- w'd asking the qesh'ns ↑anyway
40
41 so they said wi'l just make hav'm make a s^htatemint
42
- 43 Dean: [Mmhm?
44 [
- 45 Nixon: [-hehhyhehhyhehh I wonder about that (·) procedurè.=It's a little (0.3) a little
46
47 tough isn' it in it's h[h ·hhh
48 [
- 49 Dean: [Uh: ver[y () [)
50 [] []
- 51 Nixon: [it's] (0.2)[very risky ts- ez far ez uh:h ·hehhhh
52
53 ez (·) p-ez jepardizin:gh ah mean I would th-I would think that Mitchell et

1 Nixon: all hev a
2
3 (5.0)
4
5 Dean: khuhh
6
7 Nixon: purty pretty tough constuh- >uh mean have a good Constitution'l quesh'n
8
9 there w[ouldn' thee<]
10 []
11 Dean: [I w o u l d] think è-I think they would'n (·) indeed if uh:=
12
13 Nixon: =hYeah[h
14 []
15 Dean: [if th'r named in open [court like tha:t,
16 []
17 (Nixon): °°[·hh°°
18
19 Nixon: °°·t·k°° ·hhhhh Give me suh uh-t Gimme a li'l feeleeng on tha:t.=Don't let
20
21 them know I'm checkin' ↓on that↓ but ·he[hh give me] ye:r er duh do a li'l=
22 []
23 Dean: [I underst'n]
24
25 Nixon: =hmhh=
26
27 Dean: =([])(ah'm) digging on that [for y[uh ()
28 [] []
29 Nixon: [rundow]n [·hh [o n t h a t ↓an:d uh hh ·t·hehhh
30
31 ah'll caw yih abaht two thirly er three.h[h
32 []
33 Dean: [Awright sir
34
35 Nixon: Oka:y.h
36 []
37 Dean: [Goo[d
38 []
39 Nixon: [hQ↓ka[y.
40 []
41 Dean: [Thank yo[u
42 []
43 Nixon: [Hope you gotta good night' sleeph [hhuh ·he]hh
44 []
45 Dean: [I d i d]
46
47 Nixon: Ez we-ll esshu c^han [these da:ys=
48 []
49 (Dean): [()
50
51 Dean: =he[h huh huh °huh°]
52 []
53 Nixon: [·heh huh ·heyuh] Well let me ↓sa:y keep yer- (0.2) keep mI tol:d the

- 1 Nixon: other boys I sid Godu ·hehh yihknow it's tough fer ↓ever'body John 'n you
2
3 all iv you er,h good friends in I said den yo' fought the good fight ·hehhh
4
5 an:du you'll live tuh fight a↑nother one.=
6
7 Dean: =°°Yuh°° hheh h[eh
8 [
9 Nixon: ['At's 'ee import'n thing?
10
11 Dean: In↓deed.
12
13 Nixon: ⁶ ·ptch Right?
14
15 Dean: No pro'lem there (sh[ur)
16 [
17 Nixon: [Right!=
18
19 Dean: =N[o sir.
20 [
21 Nixon: [°Okay[:°
22 [
23 °(((thuk dunk ka-da dk)))°
24
25 ((grn))
26
27 ((receiver down))
28
29 ((wooeeet))
30
31 (5.8) ((dead tape))
32
33 Voice: This c'ndclu:des (·) segmin' two: of conversation number thirdy eight (·)
34
35 dash (·) eighdy (·) four.
36
37 (1.6)
38
39 Voice: This c'ndcludes (·) the abuse, of gover'mint p^hower segments, (0.2) fer
40
41 co:nversation number °·h° thirdy eight (·) dash (·) eighdy, four.