

Conversation Number: 165-10 excerpt
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Location: Camp David Telephone

The accompanying audio file was converted to MP3 format from a compilation audio CD of conversations relating to Mark Felt produced by the staff of the Nixon Presidential Materials Project at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

[See tape log file produced by the National Archives for conversation prior to the start of this clip]

Nixon: It seems to me that, just to get one minor thing out of the way, that I thought I expressed to you last night with regard to Felt is correct. I think doing something now looks like a reaction, an angry reaction, to the fact that Felt then would claim had one, the one that had blown the whistle on Ellsberg, see? On the Ellsberg trial.

Haig: Yeah.

Nixon: I think the thing to do is to wait until we get the new man, and then the new man is told—

Haig: I agree.

Nixon: —to clean house—

Haig: Yeah.

Nixon: —and in the mean time, Felt—Everybody's to know that he's a goddamn traitor, and [to] just watch him damn carefully.

Haig: That's right.

Nixon: And he has to go, of course, because it's now obvious. You see, we had these reports—An interesting thing [*is that*] I had these reports out. I got them directly, you know, from the—that he [*Felt*] was leaking it to *Time Magazine*, from their attorney. This was, oh, months ago.

Haig: Yeah.

Nixon: And before I sent Pat Gray's name up [*for nomination, in May 1972*], I said, "Pat," I said, "I want you to check these leaks." He said, "Oh, they couldn't be from the Bureau." I said, "Yes they are." I said, "Some are." And I said, "We have from very good authority that they're from Felt." [*Gray said*], "Oh, they couldn't be from Felt." I said, "Dammit, they may be," and I said, "You ought to give him a lie-detector test."

You know, I was very tough. “Oh, we can’t do that,” he said, “But,” he said, “I vouch for Felt.” I also raised it with Kleindienst. Kleindienst vouched for Felt, which shows how clever Felt is.

Haig: Yeah.

Nixon: But, my point is that this was three or four months ago, Al, that we were on to the son-of-a-bitch and had a, you know, we had something. We had lead, and it shows you how important that you and I have got to be sure that when we get leads like this in the future we don’t disregard them.

Haig: That’s right. That’s right.

Nixon: Isn’t that interesting?

Haig: That’s incredible.

Nixon: What did he do? Did he go out and tell them about what? About the—that—the thing that—What did the judge dismiss on? Just on the fact that he had heard that there had been wiretapping of this fellow [Daneil Ellsberg] which occurred long before the case began? Was that it?

Haig: Yeah, well, he—The way he described it, of course, is that the irregularities—

Nixon: I see.

Haig: —that’s the phrase.

Nixon: Aren’t you just as glad [*that*] it’s over, though?

Haig: I think it’s good to have it over.

Nixon: You do?

Haig: We’re not going to get anything from this. It’s good. It’s just—

Nixon: The liberals can now have their time and this guy is—ain’t gonna be their big hero. Now, the other—

[*clip ends abruptly*]