

“Blow the Safe and Get It”

Date: June 17, 1971

Participant: Richard M. Nixon

Participant: Henry A. Kissinger

Start Time: 17:15

Place: Oval Office

President Nixon had heard rumors that the Brookings Institution, a think tank in Washington, DC, held files containing potentially damaging information about U.S. military strategy in Vietnam. In response, Nixon ordered a clandestine team to clean out the Brookings safe and retrieve the files.

President Nixon: [H. R.] Bob [Haldeman], now, do you remember [Tom Charles] Huston’s plan? Implement it.

Henry A. Kissinger: But couldn’t we go over? Now, Brookings [Institution] has no right to have [President Nixon attempts to interject] classified documents.

President Nixon: You know, I mean, I want it implemented on a thievery basis. Goddamn it, get in and get those files. Blow the safe and get it.

End of excerpt.

“Richard Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. ‘Bob’ Haldeman, Henry A. Kissinger, and Ronald L. Ziegler on 17 June 1971,” Conversation 525-001 (PRDE Excerpt A), *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [*Chasing Shadows*, ed. Ken Hughes] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014–). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4006738>