

“No Way to Delay the Indictments”

Date: August 1, 1972

Participant: Richard M. Nixon

Participant: H. R. “Bob” Haldeman

Start Time: 10:33

Place: Oval Office

President Nixon and White House chief of staff H. R. “Bob” Haldeman discussed the possible timing of the first indictments to be handed down for the June 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters. The President worried about the negative effect these Watergate indictments might have on the Republican National Convention, scheduled to take place later in August, and on the national election, scheduled for 7 November 1972.

President Nixon: You say no cooperation from the Justice Department? I understand the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation].

H. R. “Bob” Haldeman: Well—

President Nixon: I—well, I—

Haldeman: It’s been very hard. It’s—

President Nixon: It’s hard.

Haldeman: [Henry E.] Petersen has been reasonably good.

President Nixon: [*Unclear.*]

Haldeman: Within—in fact, pretty, I guess, darn good.

President Nixon: But they’re just scared to death—

Haldeman: The problem has been [Richard G.] Kleindienst, who has just, you know, [*unclear*—just totally washed his hands. Now, he’s come back in. [John D.] Ehrlichman hauled him in yesterday and said, “You know, this has gotten ridiculous. We . . .”

President Nixon: Sure.

Haldeman: “Now is—you’ve got everything you need. Now, for Christ’s sake, turn it off. Bring your indictments.” Kleindienst seemed to see the light. It’s really not a—

President Nixon: They don’t think this delaying—there’s no way to delay the indictments till after the election, is there?

Haldeman: No.

President Nixon: No way to speed it up?

Haldeman: Yes. It could be speeded up, but then it would hit right about the Republican [National] Convention time. It possibly could be speeded up, not certainly.

End of excerpt.

“Richard M. Nixon and H. R. ‘Bob’ Haldeman on 1 August 1972,” Meeting Tape 758-011, Draft Transcript, Presidential Recordings Program, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.