

Conversation Number 740-3
June 22, 1972, 3:44-4:06 P.M.
From the Official Press Conference Transcript regarding Watergate

[Note: Audio recording begins running after the first question was asked and the president began to answer.]

BUGGING OF DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS

[1.] Q. Mr. O'Brien [chairman of the Democratic National Committee] has said that the people who bugged his headquarters had a direct link to the White House. Have you had any sort of investigation made to determine whether this is true?

THE PRESIDENT. Mr. Ziegler and also Mr. Mitchell, speaking for the campaign committee, have responded to questions on this in great detail. [Audio begins:] They have stated my position and have also stated the facts accurately. This kind of activity, as Mr. Ziegler has indicated, has no place whatever in our electoral process, or in our governmental process. And, as Mr. Ziegler has stated, the White House has no involvement whatever in this particular incident.

As far as the matter now is concerned, it is under investigation, as it should be, by the proper legal authorities, by the District of Columbia police, and by the FBI. I will not comment on those matters, particularly since possible criminal charges are involved.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

[10.] Miss Angelo [Bonnie Angelo, Time-Life]

Q. Mr. Mitchell has declined to make public the source of about \$10 million of contributions to your reelection fund. I know that this is in the letter of the law, but I wonder in the spirit of the law, of more openness, what you think about that and might you make them public?

THE PRESIDENT. Mr. Ziegler has, I think, responded to that, and Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans. I think it is Mr. Stans who has declined to do that. I support the position that Mr. Stans has taken. When we talk about the spirit of the law and the letter of the law, my evaluation is that it is the responsibility of all individuals, a high moral responsibility to obey the law and to obey it totally.

Now, if the Congress wanted this law to apply to contributions before the date in April that it said the law should take effect, it could have made it apply. The Congress did not apply it before that date and under the circumstances Mr. Stans has said we will comply with the law as the Congress has written it, and I support his decision.

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