

In April, 1973, when John Dean was about to talk to prosecutors in exchange for immunity, Nixon finally faced reporters in the White House press room and sought to establish that he was in front of the parade to learn the truth about Watergate. Anyone in his administration who was indicted would be suspended, anyone convicted would be fired, and immunity would be granted to no one. With the whole fiasco unraveling, Nixon, in a midnight phone conversation with Kissinger, sounded beaten down. Nixon tells Kissinger he's thinking of resigning and letting Agnew take over. Kissinger dissuades him.

From *Very Strange Bedfellows*:

Nixon: "Well. Rather hard day, wasn't it?"

Kissinger: "Well it was hard for you."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "I didn't know you had made the statement you did until the evening. When I think of the discipline with which you conducted the meeting in the morning..."

Nixon: "And then going through the evening."

Kissinger: "...And then going through the evening."

Nixon: "The problem I have is I can't look at it in the detached way I really should, [that] these people, God-damn it, they're guilty, throw them out and go on. But, just the personal things, God-damn—I think of these good men —"

Kissinger [finishing the thought]: "—who wanted to do the right thing."

Nixon: "Well, it's gonna splash on a lot of 'em. . . . The real culprit, of course is, is Mitchell. He's in charge of the whole God-damn thing, and John Mitchell should step up like a man and say, 'Look, I was in charge, I take the responsibility, period.'"

Kissinger: "I think to fire Haldeman would make him the villain."

Nixon: "Well, in the end he probably would have to go, Henry. They're gonna, you know, rip him up good."

Kissinger switches to the matter of preserving Nixon's presidency.

Nixon, sighing, replies: "Well, if we can, if we can, we will, and if we don't, what the hell. . . I've even considered the possibility of, frankly, just throwing myself on the sword, and letting Agnew take it. What the hell."

Kissinger answers: "That is out of the question, with all due respect, Mr. President. That cannot be considered. The personality, what it would do to the presidency, and to the historical injustice of it. Why should you do it, and what good would it do? Whom would it help? It wouldn't help the country. It wouldn't help any individual involved. With all respect, I don't think the president has the right to sacrifice himself for an individual. And it would, of course, be personally unjust."