

Cheney memo

9/29/74

Re: Safe.

Attached w/ receipt



On Sunday September 29, 1974, Phil Buchen came to Don Rumsfeld's office. Phil and I met and discussed the problem of the safe that had been discovered in Al Haig's office the previous afternoon. Don Rumsfeld indicated that he wanted the safe removed before he began work Monday September 30. That he wanted it turned over to the lawyers and that he wanted a receipt indicating that it had been transferred from his custody to someone else's. Phil Buchen then called Bill Casselman of his staff at home and worked out a procedure for transferring the safe from the old Haig office to Rm. 84 in the Executive Office Building. At approximately 3:45pm two GSA personnel arrived in Mr. Rumsfeld's office, also present was Phil Buchen, Hazel Fulton of the Special Files Unit and Barry Roth who works for the Counsel's office.

The receipt which is attached was prepared at that time. The safe was loaded on the dolly and removed from Mr. Rumsfeld's office, the office previously used by General Haig at 3:55pm. The safe was accompanied from the First Floor West Wing to Rm. 84 in EOB by Hazel Fulton, Barry Roth, the two GSA personnel and me. We arrived inside Rm. 84 in the EOB at approximately 4pm. When we arrived, Hazel Fulton indicated that it was not possible for her to open the vault without a Secret Service agent being present. She thought there would have been one there by then but we had to call the Secret Service the second time.



We were informed that the Secret Service agent was on his way but that it would be some time before he got there.

We waited from approximately 4:00pm until 4:55pm for the Agent to arrive. When he arrived at 4:55pm he took the names of all of those present and then authorized Hazel Fulton to open the vault located in Rm. 84.

Once the vault was opened, the locked safe from Gen. Haig's office was wheeled in by the two GSA personnel. The Agent wrote down a description of the safe and the vault was closed.

At that point, Hazel Fulton signed the receipt for the safe which is attached and added the note at the bottom of the receipt to the effect that the vault was opened at 4:55pm and closed at 4:59pm.

Copies of the receipt, the original of which is attached, were retained by Hazel Fulton and by Barry Roth of the Counsel's office.

I then returned to the office and informed Mr. Rumsfeld that I had completed the transfer of the safe to a secure area pursuant with instructions from the Counsel's office and from him and showed him the receipt.

At approximately 5:30pm, I talked briefly with Phil Buchen about the transfer. I also indicated to him at that time that I felt they should be very careful about who they let in that room.

Supposedly, Hazel Fulton and one other person, Trudy Brown have the combination. Neither one of them is permitted to open the safe without one of a handful of Secret Service agents present.



Hazel indicated that the vault may indeed contain the papers of some of the Watergate defendants. None of them can get in without written permission from Bill Casselman of the Counsel's office and has to notify the head of the Secret Service in writing before any of them are permitted to go into use, read their own papers in preparation of testimony for their trial.

I explained to Phil that I was concerned that the safe not be tampered with or that anyone could allege that it had been tampered with in the course of some of the defendants making use of their papers which are currently in that space. Phil indicated to me that he would discuss it with Casselman and make certain that some arrangement was found to guarantee the integrity of the safe. Until such time as the Counsel had decided under what conditions it would be opened.

Attachment

NOTE: On Tuesday October 1, 1974, Barry Roth called Brenda Williams to relay to Mr. Rumsfeld that the aforementioned safe was blown open and discovered to be empty. It was then sent to GSA for repair. Above action was supervised by Secret Service.



September 29, 1974

This acknowledges receipt from Donald Rumsfeld  
of one (1) safe (locked) removed from the office previously  
used by General Alexander M. Haig at 3:55 p.m. and  
placed in Room 84, in the Executive Office Building at  
4:00 p.m.

Hazel F. Fulton  
Special Files Unit

Vault was opened at 4:55 p.m. and closed at 4:59 p.m.

H.F.

