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CONFIDENTIAL MEMO - 1968 Nixon Meeting to Discuss Vice Presidential Nomination-
Thursday, August 8, 1968

On Wednesday, August 7, 1968, the day for the balloting for the nomination for the Presidency of the United States at the Republican Convention in Miami Beach, about 6:00 p.m., I was in the control trailer for Nixon Campaign just outside Convention Hall. Mr. John Mitchell asked me to be on hand for a meeting with former Vice President Nixon immediately after the balloting was concluded. During the afternoon I had been asked by Rep. Rogers Morton (R-Md.) to keep myself loose after the balloting to meet with Mr. Nixon. Later in the evening, about 11 p.m., I was handed an envelope which was an invitation from Mr. Nixon to me to attend a meeting with him shortly after the conclusion of the balloting for President. After the balloting Bill Brock, Rog and Ann Morton, and Joyce and I drove back to the Hilton Plaza Hotel and went up to the 15th floor, and Bill Brock and I were asked to get into an elevator and go up to the Penthouse. We arrived up at the Penthouse I suppose sometime in the neighborhood of 2:30 A.M. ~~early~~ Thursday morning. We walked into a sitting room which had couches, chairs, easy chairs, straight chairs, and a round coffee table with a marble top in the center of the room. We were among the first to arrive.

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Those present ~~as they arrived shortly thereafter~~ included the following 21 people:

- Dick Ogilvie, candidate for Governor of Illinois
- Rep. Les Arends (R-Ill.), Minority Whip of the House
- Governor Louie Nunn of Kentucky
- Congressman Sam Devine (R-Ohio), one of the assistant Floor leaders
- Senator Fannin (R-Arizona)



Senator Thurmond, (R-South Carolina)

Former Senator and former Republican Presidential Nominee Barry Goldwater
a Mr. Murffin, who was the Chairman of the Florida Delegation at the Convention
and G.O.P. State Chairman

Congressman Bill Brock (R-Tennessee), one of the assistant Floor leaders
Congressman John Rhodes (R-Arizona), Chairman of the Republican Policy
Committee

Bob Finch, a former Nixon staffer who is now Lieutenant Governor of the
State of California

Rep. Don Rumsfeld (R-Ill.)

John Mitchell, one of Nixon's Senior law partners and Campaign Manager for Nixon
Senator Jack Miller of Iowa

Former Governor and former two-time Presidential Candidate Thomas E. Dewey
Governor James Rhodes of Ohio

Republican State Chairman of Ohio Mr. John Andrews

Senator Fong (R-Hawaii)

Harry Dent, Nixon Chairman for South Carolina

Herbert Brownell, former Attorney General of the U.S. under Eisenhower

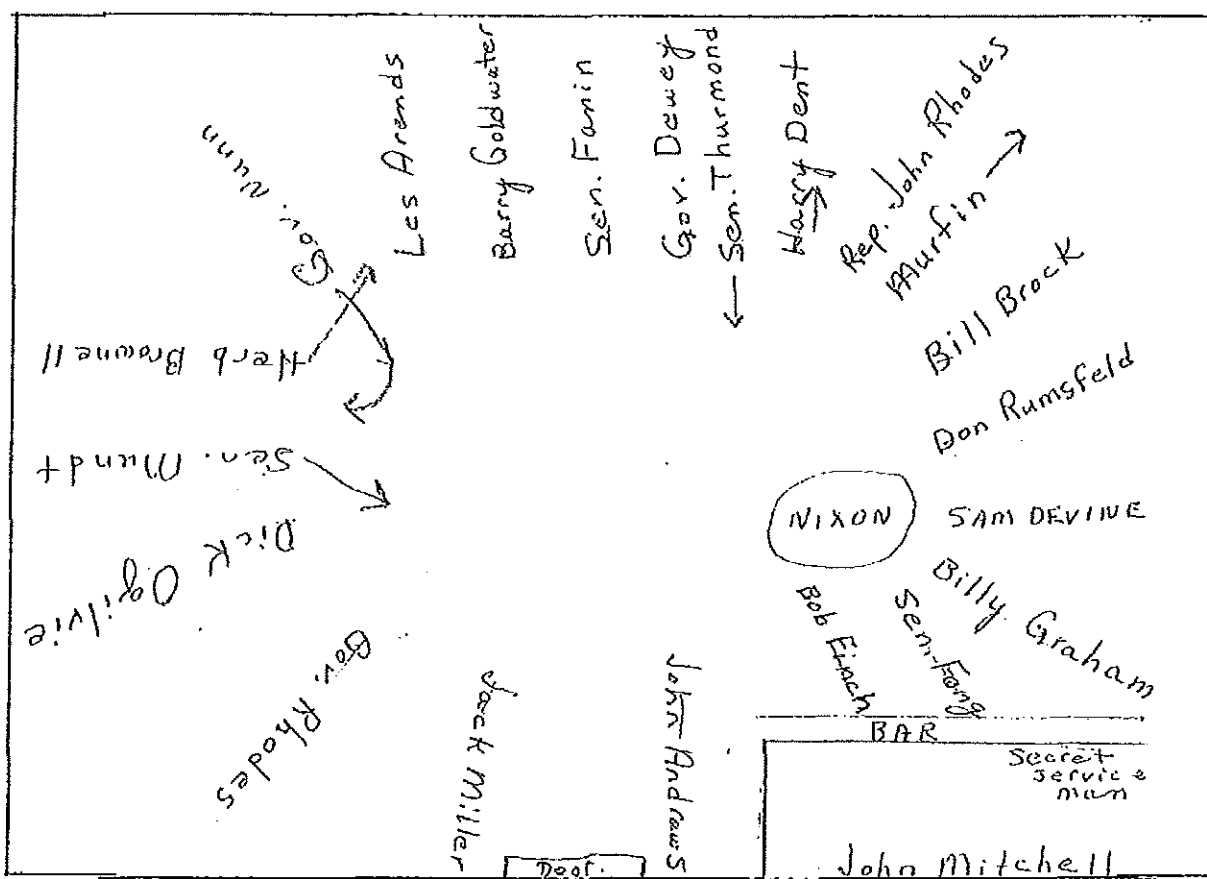
Senator Karl Mundt of South Dakota

Dr. Billy Graham, the Evangelist

one Secret Serviceman

Vice President Nixon





R { The people that obviously ^{had to be consulted} ~~should have been present~~ and were ~~not~~, the official party leaders, were to attend a meeting at 9:00 A.M. Thursday morning. There was a previous meeting with the Nixon staff that took place immediately following the Convention balloting prior to the time we arrived. (See attached list for those who attended the three meetings.) } The meeting started roughly at 2:30 Thursday morning. We finally left at about 5:00 A.M. Thursday morning. Nixon was slightly late coming in from his meeting with his staff people. Needless to say, when you look at the names in the group I looked like the lone ranger. After shaking hands around the room Mr. Nixon allowed a press photographer to come in. Pictures were taken at



various angles so the meeting is on film. At the conclusion of the meeting I was told by Charles Nicodemus, who was waiting in the Lobby that the names of the participants had been released to the Press.

Mr. Nixon put his feet up on the edge of the coffee table and was fiddling with his watchband, kind of twiddling his thumbs while he was talking. He was exceedingly precise, and articulate. He appeared rested, sharp and alert. He knew what he was up to. He ~~absolutely~~ controlled the meeting. The participants were deferential to him, with possibly one exception--~~notably~~ that one exception was Gov. Rhodes. } Mr. Nixon proceeded to set out some ground rules. He reiterated his letter to us and his requirements and said that he planned to run a national campaign. That meant he planned to campaign in the east, west, south and north. He was not going to use ^a~~the~~ southern strategy or a northern strategy. He was going to campaign the ~~few~~ country. He indicated that he felt the Vice Presidential Nominee was important. He did not intend to do what Jack Kennedy did and have the Vice Presidential Nominee (Johnson) travel one part of the country (the south) only. He felt that 1960 was past; from this point forward the Presidential Candidate would be the who would be looked at, and the Vice Presidential Candidate would be needed for potential to serve as President, his energies, campaign abilities, ability not to make any serious mistakes, bring in some electoral votes and campaign the nation. } He referred to the letter which he had sent to a number of people wherein he had stated that he wanted their views on the Vice Presidential possibilities. A copy of that letter with my response is attached. I won't go into it except to say that he asked us to indicate who we thought would be the best qualified for the Presidency, then who we thought would run best in our part of the country, and then who we thought would run best



nationally under the new guidelines he stipulated that evening concerning the national campaign. (He then proceeded to say there was one additional qualification he wanted to add to that list. Namely, that the man must be acceptable to the bulk of the country and would not cause a breach or a great wrenching in the Party. He planned to campaign nationally and didn't want to divide off a major segment of the Party. To unify the nation, he said, the Party must be unified. It should be mentioned that before any of the others started talking Nixon listed a number of the names that were being discussed in the Press, including the obvious ones, Rockefeller, Hatfield, Lindsay, Percy, Volpe, Agnew, Tower, Baker, Reagan, Bush, Gov. Rhodes, Griffin, Scranton and several others.

He then suggested that we go around the room and each indicate who we were for and why, under those preset guidelines, and who we were against. He turned to his right and the first person he saw, ~~was~~ Rep. Sam Devine, was the first person called on. Nixon said, "Sam start it off." Sam simply said that he had written a response to Richard Nixon's letter to him and he had nothing further to add.

I was next - to Sam's right. Thus, I, in effect was the ~~very~~ first person out of the 23 to utter a sound on the subject. I couldn't believe it! I wanted to be the clean-up hitter. However, I had resolved when I walked into that room I was going down there to tell him what I thought, not to make points. A good man would want that and I consider him damn able. I decided to simply work to see that my point of view was put across. Unfortunately, the meeting was still very stiff at this point, and I had not had time to size up the group or Nixon's attitude. [I said that first I wanted them to know that I felt very deeply on the subject and that



because of the depth of my feeling and the importance I attached to the decision I was going to say some things that, it would seem from his preliminary remarks, fell completely out of the boundaries he had set out for the discussion, but that I felt it was important that I say them. I indicated that my first choices were Percy, Lindsay, or Rockefeller although I sensed that Rocky was out of it. I said that the reason I felt that was undoubtedly because I was from a northern urban area, and I conceded that point to the participants who were not from the north, but I could only talk about what I knew about. I felt very strongly that it was important that we had a candidate that would help the Republican Party in the northern, industrial, urban centers, and that I was convinced that these two (Percy and Lindsay) were the individuals who would do the most to communicate to the American people some feeling that the Republican Party was interested in the problems that affect, then, these parts of the Nation. [I said next that I selected them because they both were excellent communicators, and I looked him flush in the eye and said that I liked a person that when he talks you know he means it, and he says it right out of his "gut," and where there isn't going to be any question but that people will know that they care deeply about what they are saying. And I said these two, in my view, could do the best job. [It's late, and it is now 6:20 ^{with} in the morning, and I am a little vague as to what else I said. I said if as it turns out that Percy and Lindsay are excluded for the reasons indicated than my preferences would be Sen. Robert Griffin, Sen. Mark Hatfield, former Governor Scranton or Rep. Rogers Morton. One of the reasons for mentioning Rog is because he could have a National appeal. I felt he was qualified, and that he is a damn good communicator. In no sense, I added, did I feel it would be wise to select a man from below the Mason



Dixon line. The media would crucify us.

I emphasized the need to select a man who could speak for the Party to the young, the black, the disaffected in a way that could encourage them to responsible citizenship rather than turning them off.

When I ~~failed~~^{pitched} my pitch for Percy and Lindsay, Nixon asked me "What about Hatfield?". I responded by saying that he has very much the same credentials and abilities as each of the three and certainly would be, in my view, preferable to most of the other people who have been mentioned, but that I felt he was a bit "clinical" and didn't have the same degree of emotional rapport that I felt was important for the groups in the country that were disaffected--the blacks, the young, etc., groups that, whether they vote for us or not, need to be communicated with. I injected the mood of the country into the discussion.

Next to me was Bill Brock. Bill expressed a feeling that he shared some of my comments about Lindsay but that he did not share my comments about Percy. He made a deferential remark about Howard Baker, a fellow Tennessean. Bill then went on and echoed my feeling about Rog Morton, and threw in Clark MacGregor's name and several others.

Next were Murfin of Florida and Harry Dent of South Carolina and Sen. Thurmond who made strong Reagan pitches. They said that they had been able to hold the delegates in the south on the basis that Nixon would not select someone who was offensive to the south, that they, and Senator Thurmond particularly, had put their political futures on the line, and that Percy, Lindsay, or Rockefeller, Hatfield were not acceptable. They said it very well, very reasonably, very forcefully.

John Rhodes of Arizona was sitting between Murfin and Dent. He mentioned Bob Griffin and the Southerners, the string of four sitting to



his right later picked it up and indicated they were favorable to him. Rhodes also mentioned Jerry Ford.

Governor Dewey was next. He was interesting, circuitous, and seemed to have talked to Nixon at some point in the last three or four weeks separately on the subject. He expressed question about Volpe's ability, asked if Agnew might have taken an unpopular stand concerning the Greek crises, being of Greek extraction. He didn't contribute too much.

Senator Fannin was sitting between Dewey and Goldwater. Fannin echoed sentiments similar to those of the previous three. When asked specifically, he recommended against Percy. He said he serves with him, knows him, and advises against him, on the basis of reliability.

Barry Goldwater was next. Barry indicated he couldn't recommend Lindsay, Percy or Hatfield. During the course of the evening he said that the conservatives could probably live with Scranton, but felt that Scranton was a little light. In answer to a question from me he expressed opposition to Percy saying he had known him when he was selling cameras and that you can't tell what the hell he is going to do next, and that he's unreliable.

The Southerners and Conservatives wanted Griffin, Baker or Bush after Reagan.

Sitting next to Goldwater was Les Arends. Arends made a pitch for Howard Baker, Dirksen's son-in-law. He gave some pluses to Lindsay, but in a guarded way, seemingly more for PR within the group than persuasion, kind of concluding that Lindsay would be a little difficult to handle. Interestingly, he talked about Lindsay in a favorable way but it didn't come out a plus, which is Arend's art.

Next to Les was Gov. Louie Nunn. Nunn gave a Southern pitch. He pitched against Lindsay, Percy, Hatfield, Rockefeller. His first choice was Reagan, but could accept the middle types.



Repeatedly during the discussions, Nixon kept coming back and asking almost every person "What about Volpe?" and "What about Agnew?" It's clear in my mind that Volpe and Agnew are among the final four or five being considered. I think Hatfield's also in the final group being considered.

Next to Nunn was Brownell. Brownell, again, seemed to have talked previously with Nixon. He did not make a great contribution. In answer to a direct question from Nixon as to whether Agnew's, Baker's and Bush's mere year-and-a-half experience bothered him, he allowed as how it did.

Moving around from Brownell was Senator Mundt. Senator Mundt had been doing some writing on his paper. He came out with a pitch for Scranton. I forget who his other choices were, but I think they were Lindsay or Hatfield but one might have been Percy. I'm vague, but they were all people I could live with. Amazing.

Nixon commented that Scranton wouldn't take it, for personal reasons. Dewey countered, suggesting that he might take it, and that got us off on the Scranton question, who I personally find most acceptable.

Ogilvie was next after Mundt. He made a statement wherein he mentioned Lindsay and Percy. By the time it was over it was not really a pro-Percy statement, in that he added in direct response to a question that Percy had not told him till forty-five minutes before his press conference that he was going to come out for Rockefeller, and as the candidate for governor he needs to know these things, which of course was just asinine. Why should he have to know? But, at any rate, it confirmed what practically everyone else in the room felt about Percy, that he was not a reliable person and that he flopped all over. Ogilvie was unimpressive. His suggestion of Dirksen as Vice President was goofy. After Rhodes got through Ogilvie kind if agreed with him.



Moving farther around the room the next person was Rhodes of Ohio. He talked longer than any other four people. He gave us his standard speech on "Jobs." He came out with a rather confused but very strongly put statement without naming a lot of names, but it was the Northern strategy. He said you could talk about the cities going Democrat but there were a lot of sympathizers out in the suburbs. By God he was right. In effect he came out for Lindsay, pure and simple. He told the Southerners it couldn't be their way.

Between, I think, Rhodes and Andrews was Senator Jack Miller. Miller, during the course of the pre-balloting period, had indicated that he would vote for Nixon if he could be in on the vice-presidential selection session. He was there only because he had made this specific request. He's apparently not well thought of in the Senate but he's an interesting guy, and unfortunately I'm afraid what he said was not listened to. Why anyone would think he would be listened to if he had to force his way into the meeting is beyond me. However, to everyone's amazement he got up and said that he was for Lindsay first, and I forget who or in what order but Scranton, Percy or Hatfield second or third. ~~I forget what it was.~~ He was sort of echoing what I had said and what Rhodes said, and a little bit of what Mundt had said. It was kind of a strange thing. He was standing and like Rhodes made a speech rather than discussed the subject. He as much as told Nixon he wouldn't win unless he picked one of those three. So, believe it or not, I ended up in basic agreement with Mundt, Governor Rhodes, and Senator Jack Miller on the liberal Northern selection. If you'd told me before I walked in there that that would be the case I would have thought you were crazy---incredible!



Then came John Andrews, State GOP Chairman of Ohio, who simply echoed what Rhodes had said.

Then came Bob Finch. Finch said after 1960 it would be hard to take someone you couldn't count on, recalling the problem they had with Lodge in the Nixon operation, and he cautioned against Lindsay for that reason, echoing what Les had said previously, that he'd be hard to control.

Next came Senator Fong, who spoke in a rather confused way. He talked purely politically about where you pick up the most and said even though he, Fong, was a liberal that Reagan would be the best. I guess the sum of his statement was that he was against Percy because Percy would always be standing in front of Dick when the photographs were being taken or shoving in front of him on TV. This, even though Fong's more liberal than Percy.

Last was Billy Graham. He came out with a statement that he felt that the country was spiritually and morally in need. He said that while he agreed with Don that Senator Hatfield was somewhat "clinical", he felt that his deep spiritual feeling and reputation gave him a constituency that most politicians probably didn't even know existed and that it guaranteed him audiences and support and properly so. He said that he, Billy Graham, felt that Mark Hatfield could prove strong in the religious South because he was a preacher by nature. He added that Hatfield could learn to be less clinical.

There was, of course, a great deal more discussion. Some people said they thought Agnew would be good, some said they thought Volpe would be good, others expressed questions about both of those. There was one criticism of Agnew because of his extreme statements, Governor Nunn feeling he had erratically jumped around on Rocky and Nixon endorsements. There were



critical statements about Volpe because of over-ambition and lack of weight.

I was ~~very~~ sad when I started to leave, when the meeting adjourned. Every attempt I made to project Lindsay or Percy seriously into the discussions, which as I recall was a total of three or four attempts, beyond my opening remarks, was responded to by the person to whom I directed the question in a negative way. I specifically asked Barry Goldwater whether he would fit Percy in the same category with Scranton when he said Scranton would be acceptable and he said "No." In effect, I expressed not only a minority viewpoint but I was the only one in the room who had much positive to say about Percy. I was one of four or five who were for Lindsay and I was one of five or six of twenty-one who would have accepted Hatfield or Scranton.

At any rate, I was sad when I was getting up to leave. I suppose I was sad that I hadn't said more, although I talked as much as anyone in the room except Rhodes. I was sad that I hadn't been more eloquent and forceful, and yet on reflection I think I did an acceptable job. However, I did not take over the meeting with either the force of my personality or the eloquence of my arguments. I was disappointed that I had to speak first. By the time we had gone around the room I recalled that I had not expressed any negatives about anybody. I did not want it to end without my doing so. At the same time I didn't want the meeting to end with my simply saying "And beside everything I said before I'm against these guys for these reasons," so I refrained from doing it in the meeting. As we were leaving there was a group hanging behind talking. I went to the door and Nixon was very much alone. He shook my hand and he said "Don, you've got an easy District. I'd like to have you come with me, and I want to talk to you about it." I don't know quite what that means, "Come with me," but I



suppose we'll find out soon. [A footnote here is that Mitchell had asked me earlier in the day yesterday that he wanted me involved in the campaign in a substantial way.] I said to Nixon that I wanted him to know that I was delighted that he got the nomination, that I did have a reasonably good District, that I would have some time available, and that I'd be proud to work for him, but that I wanted him to know that if he picked a candidate from below the Mason-Dixon line there wasn't any point in running, in my view, and that that meant Tower, Bush and Baker as well as Reagan. He answered by kind of nodding his agreement. As I was still shaking his hand he then said "You've seen the difficulty that we have." As he had mentioned in his opening remarks, and this is not a normal situation, that it is a most difficult decision this time. He said "Don, I'm afraid we're all going to have to give a little on this one." I answered saying "I hope we don't have to give so much that we lose the chance to do something exciting." That was the end of the conversation. I went out the door, and went down to the lobby with Governor Rhodes and Billy Graham.

