

May 16, 1973, 4:57 p.m.

J. Fred Buzhardt and Robert Mardian

White House Telephone 046-086

Audio: <http://nixontapeaudio.org/chron5/046-086.mp3>

[00:03:24.3]

Buzhardt: Hello?

Mardian: Hello, Fred. How are you?

Buzhardt: Bob, how the hell are you?

Mardian: Fine, thanks.

Buzhardt: It's been a long time.

Mardian: It has. What's your new job?

Buzhardt: I am Special Counsel to the President.

Mardian: Good.

Buzhardt: [laughs] Oh guess what?

Mardian: [laughs]

Buzhardt: Bob, there were some documents that were released by the court today—

Mardian: Yeah.

Buzhardt: —which consisted of a certain domestic intelligence plan—

Mardian: A what?

Buzhardt: A certain domestic intelligence plan. That's dated the summer of 1970. Are you reading me?

Mardian: Yeah.

Buzhardt: Ok. Now this was handled here by a fellow named Huston until about August of '70. At which time Dean came aboard and took over the responsibility.

Mardian: Right.

Buzhardt: Some time along about that time you came aboard and formed a committee – interagency.

Mardian: Yes.

Buzhardt: Now, we—you know the committee has the documents incidentally—

Mardian: Yeah.

Buzhardt: Now there are certain things we need to know quite urgently.

Mardian: Yeah.

Buzhardt: On the committee you ran, Bob, was it an analysis group, solely and simply, or were there any activities?

Mardian: No activities whatsoever.

Buzhardt: No collections?

Mardian: What?

Buzhardt: No collections?

Mardian: No. The only activities was an attempt to — I understood this was at the direction of Ehrlichman — the president actually, that's what they told me — and the only

purpose was to — originally, it was set up in the White House, then it was moved over to [Department of Justice] internal security because everybody — the various members of the intelligence group were concerned about everybody seeing them coming in and going out together when they had meetings.

Buzhardt: Right.

Mardian: The sole purpose was to attempt to bring the intelligence, to coordinate the activities, the various law enforcement intelligence agencies within the government.

Buzhardt: Alright, now—

Mardian: Now what they were doing — see, I had, as I say, it started as a — it was a White House operation—

Buzhardt: Under my shop—

Mardian: —and what they would do would be to respond to requests. There's a charter — there was a — I don't want to call it a charter, but an agreement as to what they would do. What their scope would be.

Buzhardt: When did this come into being, Bob?

Mardian: Oh, I would guess January or February of 1971 and it was a friend of — a judge, a former justice of the Washington Supreme Court was supposed to be the working director of it.

Buzhardt: Did he ever show up?

Mardian: Oh yeah, and he was just there on a — served as a special assistant to the Attorney General. We put him on the payroll there. That was Ehrlichman's idea. He was Ehrlichman's neighbor and subsequently when he got appointed back on the court — he went back on the — I think the Federal District Court. Bernie Wells, who was in my shop—

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: —was put in charge of it, and he is still in charge of it.

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: But there is nothing — all it is, is an attempt — all it was, was an attempt to get the various agencies to work together. It included National Security Agency—

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: Your shop — Defense Intelligence Agency, although I guess they never admitted they had anybody working on it over there. But as I recall—

Buzhardt: I know the guy that was liaison.

Mardian: Yeah. Well, that is all they had was liaison.

Buzhardt: Ok, let me ask you—

Mardian: It was a problem. If the White House wanted it staffed out, they would—if CIA had input on it, had a foreign aspect, it would contribute what information it had. If the FBI had an input on it, they would give it input—

Buzhardt: Alright. Let me ask you this Bob.

Mardian: Yeah.

Buzhardt: I have got to know some specifics here. To your knowledge, and I need to know this on the square, were any surreptitious entries made specifically for this purpose.

Mardian: Absolutely not. Hell no!

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: Well, if it were—that's, uh, no it couldn't have been. Bernie Wells was running it for Christ's sake. It was, all they were doing were making assessments.

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: To my knowledge that's all they ever did.

Buzhardt: Only assessments?

Mardian: That's all. There would be a request for information concerning whatever it was the White House wanted. And an assessment was made and copies went to the constituent liaison agencies—

Buzhardt: Right.

Mardian: —as well as the White House and that's all.

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: But that's all they did was to make assessments.

Buzhardt: Right.

Mardian: They were not op- [laughs] — they weren't operating anything.

Buzhardt: Alright. Who was your point of contact over here? Did you work with Dean at all on it?

Mardian: Actually, I didn't really have much to do with it—

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: —except to put — to help put the group together.

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: The contact was direct from — from Dean's office as I recall, to Bernie Wells.

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: And copies of the work product, as I say, went to each of the constituent departments and agencies. But look, I forget what the hell assessment they made but there was nothing of any consequence, and there certainly wasn't any covert operations that I was aware of and I am sure there weren't. Bernie Wells wouldn't have gone into anything like that—

Buzhardt: At this time—

Mardian: In fact, they never did work together to well, Fred, because, well you can imagine trying to get a bunch of people like that all — they are all holding their own information. This was simply an attempt to establish liaison between them with respect to particular problems the White House had.

Buzhardt: Ok. To the best of your knowledge, I know the problem while Hoover was there — I am sure there weren't any. But thereafter you know of no entries made by the Bureau?

Mardian: Hell, no. No siree. Here again, not as a result of that operation. What the hell did they come up with as far as in these papers to indicate what this group were doing?

Buzhardt: Well, I don't want to get too specific over the phone. But—

Mardian: I would suggest you get in touch with Bernie Wells. You know Bernie.

Buzhardt: Yeah, I will talk to Bernie.

Mardian: I'd get Bernie, and Jesus Christ — Fred if there is anything amiss over there I would sure appreciate you calling me and let me know.

Buzhardt: I don't believe there is Bob. I am just trying to verify that there isn't.

Mardian: I am sure there wasn't.

Buzhardt: I am trying to verify a negative and you know how hard that is.

Mardian: Well, you talk to Bernie and he will level with you.

Buzhardt: But I have got to know. You know? We can't say no if—

Mardian: Is there some inference that there was?

Buzhardt: I suspect there is going to be a claim there was.

Mardian: Well that's a lot of crap.

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: Well, to my knowledge. Unless — I am never surprised by anything like that—

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: —but I just can't imagine Bernie. In fact, you know, after the Watergate thing came out and Liddy was arrested—

Buzhardt: Yeah.

Mardian: —Bernie Wells told — I heard from Bernie Wells, or Jim McGraff that worked over there, that this asshole was over there that said hell, there's only way to break — this was during the Time and Post case, or the Pentagon Papers case — there is only one way to do that and that was to bug the New York Times.

Buzhardt: Oh, God.

Mardian: They thought he was joking and never reported it to me.

Buzhardt: Yeah. Ok. Thanks a lot Bob. I've got to run.

Mardian: I am just telling you that Bernie can [unclear] on that basis. He's—

Buzhardt: I'll go back.

Mardian: Will you call me back and let me know?

Buzhardt: Yeah, I will.

Mardian: I would appreciate it.

Buzhardt: Ok.

Mardian: Thank you.

Buzhardt: Good, Bob.

Mardian: Bye.
Buzhardt: Bye.
[00:12:06.3]

**NATIONAL
SECURITY
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu