

August 7, 1974 - Wednesday - we arrived late Tuesday night in California. The television show is reaching its final stages. We probably have \$200,000 invested in it. Literally hundreds of volunteers up and down the coast working on it. Knowing what I did from Haig and Burch I had to kind of go through the motions. At night before going to sleep I made the determination that I should in fairness and in honesty send the President a letter suggesting that he resign. I wrote him a very short letter and dictated it to Tom Lias. Jane typed it and Tom took it down to the White House and gave it to Gen. Haig. I then called Haig in order to tell him what I had done. I did the same thing with him the day before on our press release, not wanting to complicate the President's problem - wanting to be on record to give the Party some leadership and also to make sure the President knew my views.

Muriel told me that Haig was in a meeting with Kissinger and one other but he came on the phone. I told him that I was sending the letter down by Lias. He assured me that matters were moving forward and that indeed the schedule has now been arrived at and that Burch would call me later. I sat around and made a few other calls and then called Burch. He apparently had been told to call me several hours later. He told me that the scenario would unfold - that Goldwater, Scott and Rhodes would be invited to the White House by the President to give their assessment which they would do - he and Haig were having lunch with Goldwater. Rumors were rampant. I went over to the studio and read my part - did our thing. Rumors kept filtering in even to that meeting. The Providence paper, the Phoenix paper stating the President was going to resign that day. I clued Mary Louise Smith in and then Pete so we could make certain arrangements, plans. We agreed that Mary Louise would discreetly inquire as to how we go about cancelling. By noon rehearsal was

over and it was apparent to me that the show was a good one but that it of course would have to be scrubbed. I guess everybody there knew what was going on, but they never mentioned it. I went to a luncheon given by Bob Anderson. Talked again to Burch. He told me that it was unreal down there. He saw the President on the arm of Ziegler. He said it looked like a 100 year-old man on the arm of his male nurse. People in the White House are in a state of shock but obviously the word is filtering through there. I talked to him about cancelling the show - that I knew it would have to be cancelled. We decided that we would cancel it late Wednesday night or early Thursday morning. The Vice President was still publicly maintaining that he was coming though Rhodes, after I talked to him, sent me a telegram that he and Wyatt would not come and that he advised cancelling the show because of events.

Right after the luncheon with the Los Angeles men, at which I leveled pretty much on the views, though held back any comments on timing predictions, I went back to the hotel, talked to the White House several more times. I had a nice supportive phone call from Meade Alcorn. At a lovely dinner given by Mary Louise Smith I told the people that worked hardest on the show that we were going to abort the show, that Mary Louise and I were going back to Washington, that events were moving very fast there. I stopped short of saying that the President would resign Thursday night. I didn't tell them that by six o'clock tomorrow evening California time you should have some indication as to why I am doing what I am doing -- 9:00 eastern time being the time the President was supposed to request television time. I heard on one of the television programs (the Merv Field California poll) the announcer

saying that the people wanted vengeance, that there was no compassion. I watched the film - his trips to Moscow, signing the 18 year old vote, these triumphant memories of this President's accomplishments are almost overwhelming. And yet I simply keep coming back to this awful incident of the big lie on the tape. My thoughts are of his family, of the enormity of the shame, but gloating of those who early wanted him out, of the probable damage to some that stood with him, based on his word, to the almost certainty that the Party's fortune would improve dramatically, to my clear belief that the country would be much better off with him out of office, that confidence could be restored, still wondering how Jerry Ford would handle it all, what I should say to him knowing for sure that he should have his own person in this job, that as you move into '75 and '76 clearly it needs another chairman, more of a convention-oriented type chairman, wondering whether Ford would want me to stay in the Administration, but really not caring too much. Of course the Vice Presidential thing if worked out would be sensational, but I don't honestly believe there is much of a chance for that. I am not close to Laird and he is reported to have real great influence. Conable, Steiger, roping in Martha Griffiths, Jerry Pettis - all tell me what they want to do - working on this, but I don't believe they have the clout with Jerry. I am not sure how the Senators would feel although I guess there would be some support there.

I have thought about foreign affairs, but Kissinger looms as a problem to me. Ford will have to have Kissinger remain. Henry and I have had a run-in or two, as I have tried to defend the President. To see that the President gets credit. But in sum it doesn't really seem to matter. The overwhelming nature of the events in Washington to which I am now flying back to witness just can't be described.