

PLEASE CREDIT ANY QUOTES OR EXCERPTS FROM THIS NBC RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "NBC'S MEET THE PRESS."

M E E T T H E P R E S S

Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1974

GUEST:

WILLIAM B. SAXBE - The Attorney General

MODERATOR:

Edwin Newman - NBC News

PANEL:

Nick Trimmesch - Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Stephan Leshner - Newsweek

Ida Lewis - Encore Magazine

Carl Stern - NBC News

- - -

This is a rush transcript provided for the information and convenience of the press. Accuracy is not guaranteed. In case of doubt, please check with

MEET THE PRESS

- - -

The Attorney General answered questions on the following topics:

<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
Rise in the Crime Rate	2,3
White Collar Crime	3,10
COINTELPRO	4,5,7,8,9
Black-on-Black Crime	6,7
National Police Forces and Strike Forces	7,18
Logging of Telephone Requests from the White House and Congress	11
Responsibilities of the Attorney General	12
Outside Interference in the Watergate Inquiry	12
Nixon Pardon	13
Nixon Papers' Controversy	13
Tenure of the Special Prosecutor's Office	13,14
Voting Rights Act	14
Draft Evaders	15
Possibilities of Being Replaced as the Attorney General	16
Surveillance of Jewish and Arabian Groups in the United States	17
Number of National Security Wiretaps	17
Political Climate of America	17,18
Criminal Investigation of the Food Industry	19
Relaxation of Present Marijuana Laws	19

1 MR. NEWMAN: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is the
2 the Attorney General, William B. Saxbe. Mr. Saxbe served five
3 years as Senator from Ohio before resigning to accept his
4 cabinet position in January of this year. Before that he was
5 Attorney General of Ohio for eight years.

6 We will have the first questions now from Carl Stern of
7 NBC News.

8 MR. STERN: Mr. Saxbe, when the Department announced
9 crime figures for the first half of this year, up 16
10 per cent, it said an important reason for that upswing in
11 crime was rising unemployment, high prices. Since then
12 unemployment and prices have both arisen. Should we be on
13 notice now that the crime problem is going to get even worse?

14 GENERAL SAXBE: I wouldn't like to say that. I believe we are
15 being more effective in control of crime, but this is always a
16 threat. However, it can't be supported because during the
17 depression we didn't have a rise in crime commensurate with the
18 depth of the depression nor has it been fluctuating with the
19 economy since that time. But I do believe that we are going to
20 have to work harder.

21 MR. STERN: How are you being more effective if crime
22 is continuing to increase?

23 GENERAL SAXBE: Simply because the number of people who
24 are inclined towards crime has increased and frankly some of
25 our optimistic means of handling crime just haven't worked.

1 MR. STERN: That sixteen per cent figure though is a
2 faster rate of increase than the increase in the growth of
3 population. How can you conclude then that you are succeeding?

4 GENERAL SAXBE: Well, I believe that we will succeed,
5 not this year perhaps because we already have the 16 per cent,
6 but I think we are passing over the hump because of the age
7 group. The age group of people who were the war babies and
8 now are coming to the age of thirty where we know that crime
9 begins to slow down. I think that we can be hopeful that we
10 are not going to have a new batch of criminals as numerous as
11 the ones that we have had for the last few years.

12 MR. STERN: You have been concerned about white collar
13 crime. If industry and agriculture were being more
14 effectively policed for antitrust violations, would that bring
15 prices down?

16 GENERAL SAXBE: I think it would help. I know there are
17 several areas that we believe we should move into. We think
18 we should move into government intervention. We think govern-
19 ment keeps prices up in some areas. Many states have fair
20 trade laws simply for the purpose of keeping prices up. We
21 are now at issue with the CAB, as you know, on charter
22 flight rates and trans-Atlantic rates. We think that there
23 could be many efforts besides antitrust enforcement within the
24 government.

25 (Announcements)

* * * *

1 MR. THIMMESCH: General Saxbe, I understand you are
2 about to report on a discarded FBI surveillance program.
3 Did any Attorney General know about FBI Director Hoover's
4 so-called "dirty tricks program" when he was Attorney General?

5 GENERAL SAXBE: First, we haven't reported on it.
6 As you know it is set up for tomorrow, so I am not prepared
7 to talk about the contents of the report. As to whether any
8 Attorney General knew about it, I can't be sure. There are
9 those who indicate that there was information that they should
10 have known but as far as direct, regular reports, I don't
11 think so.

12 MR. THIMMESCH: In a situation like this how could
13 an Attorney General help but know about a program like that?
14 Isn't there control of the FBI by the various Attorney Generals?

15 GENERAL SAXBE: Yes, there is today. I can't speak
16 about the past, but you have got to recall that Mr. Hoover
17 was the Director of the FBI for many years and there were
18 Attorney Generals he didn't like and didn't even speak to,
19 I understand, and he enjoyed an unusual relationship with the
20 Presidents, numerous Presidents, and with the Congress, and
21 I think that this could be part of the problem.

22 MR. THIMMESCH: Do you think in the future this kind
23 of situation could ever develop again?

24 GENERAL SAXBE: Oh, yes.

25 MR. THIMMESCH: You do think so?

1 GENERAL SAXBE. Sure, it could always develop. I
2 certainly think that the only price you have to pay for this is
3 eternal vigilance. To say that these things could never
4 happen again just isn't so. You could have Watergate happen
5 again. You could have all these things happen again, if
6 the people and the Congress and everybody concerned aren't
7 interested.

8 MR. THIMMESCH: Should the Attorney General somehow
9 assert his authority over each and every FBI Director, then,
10 as he comes into office?

11 GENERAL SAXBE: I think that is essential. That is
12 essential.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 MS. LEWIS: Mr. Saxbe, the issue of black on black crime
2 is surfacing as the black community's No. 1 domestic issue
3 in the ghetto areas. Ad hoc community groups are springing
4 up in several cities in an attempt by citizens to meet this
5 crime and crisis. What is the Justice Department prepared to
6 do right now to assist black citizens in combatting such crimes?

7 GENERAL SAXBE: First, I would like to point out that
8 95 per cent of all law enforcement in this country is local.
9 It is city; it is county. The Justice Department has less
10 total people than the Police Department of the City of New
11 York. Of course, cooperation means cooperation at the local
12 level and this hasn't always been the case and I welcome the
13 present attitude where the people in the neighborhoods, par-
14 ticularly black neighborhoods, are now welcoming and cooperat-
15 ing with law enforcement people. It used to be -- and you know
16 this -- that when a policeman was called into a fracas in an
17 area he was met with hostility, bottles and rocks, and his
18 purpose was to come to enforce the law. The cop was the enemy.
19 Now if we can have the local people work with the police --
20 if there is trouble, let's work it out, but it has to be a
21 cooperative effort because this is where serious crime is.
22 Not just in the black neighborhoods, but in the poorer white
23 neighborhoods and unless there is cooperation with the police
24 nothing can be achieved, and we try to push this through LEAA
25 programs in every way that we can to teach this cooperation and

1 to have community relations established to the point that every-
2 one is interested in law enforcement. Until we do, you are not
3 going to get it.

4 MS. LEWIS: Then the Justice Department -- can the Justice
5 Department elevate its interests, for instance, to the level
6 of an organized crime police -- organized crime strike force,
7 like --

8 GENERAL SAXBE: Yes, but we are not in the business of
9 enforcing local laws, and this includes murder and practically
10 all of the crimes of violence. So, therefore, it has to be
11 worked through the local and it should be. We don't want a
12 national police force. We think it is bad, and certainly
13 recent events indicate that we shouldn't have it. But it
14 has to be at a cooperative level.

15 Now, the strike forces that we have are on the big time
16 organized crime and we have special laws on this type of operation
17 and conspiracy that goes beyond state lines.

18 Traditionally the black neighborhoods are not involved in
19 this.

20 MR. LESHER: General, I'd like to get back to this
21 counterintelligence program if I may.

22 GENERAL SAXBE: I want to first warn you that I am not
23 prepared to talk about the details of this and if we want to
24 waste time by me saying no, okay, but we are going on to
25 this tomorrow. The leaks I can't be responsible for.

1 MR. LESHER: Well, let's just assume that they involve
2 some dirty tricks on the part of the FBI. Without getting
3 into the details you said a moment ago that this could develop
4 again. Are you doing anything to see that it doesn't happen
5 again?

6 GENERAL SAXBE: Yes. I am not worried about it happening
7 again while I am here. It is just that we become indifferent
8 over the years and things happen and for me to come here and
9 say this could never happen again, or that Congress could pass
10 a law and thereby insure that it would never happen again,
11 this type of thing has been happening as long as there have
12 been men organized.

13 MR. LESHER: You have said a good deal in the past about
14 groups like the Symbianese Liberation Army; FBI Director Kelly
15 has been trying to get new wiretap legislation. Are you
16 suggesting now there is no such program or counterintelligence
17 program domestically in the United States by the FBI?

18 GENERAL SAXBE: That is correct.

19 MR. LESHER: There is none whatsoever?

20 GENERAL SAXBE: That is correct.

21 MR. LESHER: If I might --

22 GENERAL SAXBE: Now, in the way of counterintelligence
23 I am talking about positive acts. What we are talking about
24 now is criminal intelligence. We work diligently at that to
25 find out about criminal intelligence that will lead to

1 prosecution. This is our role in those areas set out for the
2 FBI and this is the role of every local police department, to
3 pursue criminal intelligence that will result in prosecution.
4 As far as positive acts, no.

5 MR. LESHER: None whatsoever.

6 Let's get back to the area of white collar crime.

7 MR. NEWMAN: Excuse me, Mr. Leshar. Will you explain
8 what you mean by positive acts?

9 GENERAL SAXBE: When you do things that are designed to
10 disrupt the organization. In other words,
11 you send anonymous letters, you perform various acts which in
12 wartime is known as counterintelligence. You try to dis-
13 rupt the enemy.

14 MR. NEWMAN: You are saying you are undertaking
15 no positive acts against political groups?

16 GENERAL SAXBE: That is correct. Political groups or
17 even the Simbianese Liberation Army, which is ^{certainly} a criminal group
18 not a political group.

19 MR. LESHER: But I wanted just for a moment to get
20 back to the area of white collar crime. In a recent publica-
21 tion of the National Association of Manufacturers, I read
22 something of yours which virtually declared war on white collar
23 crime. But in that light, I would like to know how you now
24 would assess the adjudication of cases of Spiro Agnew or Mr.
25 Kleindienst or even the President himself.

1 GENERAL SAXBE: Well, I can't second-guess the judges
2 that heard these cases and made these decisions. The
3 prosecution presented those cases to the judges and they
4 made the decision.

5 Now, the judge had to decide whether incarceration would
6 improve that, whether that person was a threat to society and
7 whether they needed rehabilitation. This is the thrust that
8 we hear all the time. They made the decisions they did. They
9 thought the punishment was suitable and what resulted was their
10 verdict, and I am not going to second-guess that. However, I
11 think if we are going to discourage white collar crime -- and
12 I think particularly of those areas of antitrust -- that we are
13 going to have to have something besides a consent decree and
14 the executives being able to pay their fine out of corporate
15 funds for a big rip-off and then go free.

16 MR. LESHER: So what do you suggest?

17 GENERAL SAXBE: I suggest a bill that we have sent to
18 the Congress which would increase the penalty about ten-fold
19 and permit jailing of people who are found guilty of these
20 offenses.

21 MR. STERN: Just before the so-called Saturday Night
22 Massacre your predecessor, Elliot Richardson, launched a
23 number of reforms at the Justice Department designed to reduce
24 its vulnerability to political abuses and one /instituted a
25 procedure that calls from the White House on a case would have

1 to be logged in the case file to discourage such telephone
2 calls. Is that procedure still in use at the Justice Depart-
3 ment?

4 GENERAL SAXBE: I believe so. Frankly we don't get very
5 many calls.

6 MR. STERN: I am told by your public information
7 officer that procedure is not in use.

8 GENERAL SAXBE: I advised them. I believe it was also
9 in regard to congressmen, wasn't it?

10 MR. STERN: Yes. Is that mandatory; do you require --

11 GENERAL SAXBE: I do not mandatorily require them to
12 send me a record of every call and I don't think they should
13 because --

14 MR. STERN: Put it in a case file. That was the
15 requirement Mr. Richardson instituted. To put in the case
16 file a notation that on such and such a date a call came from
17 the White House suggesting the following disposition, shall we
18 say, of the case?

19 GENERAL SAXBE: I am sure that in many cases it goes in.
20 It is not mandatory.

21 MR. STERN: Well, after all we have been through with
22 Watergate, I am not sure where we are. As the Attorney General,
23 do you regard yourself as the President's lawyer, or are you
24 free to pursue the public interest when you think the White
25 House is wrong?

1 GENERAL SAXBE: I feel that I am free to pursue the
2 public interest and up to this time there has been no conflict.

3 Now, the President's lawyer is his counsel today.
4 Originally the only duties of the Attorney General in the
5 original cabinet was to be the President's lawyer. Now, when
6 it became the Justice Department over a hundred years ago, then
7 the Attorney General established and drew control over the U.S.
8 Attorneys in the several court districts. Now he is almost
9 entirely engrossed in running the Justice Department and not
10 advising the President, although I am willing to do so when
11 called upon.

12 MR. STERN: When the Ervin Committee suggested the es-
13 tablishment of a permanent Special Prosecutor to act as a
14 watchdog over the Justice Department, the Department responded
15 that it was already taking internal measures to prevent any
16 future improper influences on its work. What internal
17 measures have been undertaken?

18 GENERAL SAXBE: The internal measures that I have is
19 that when anybody in the Justice Department receives any inter-
20 ference from any source that they are to notify me. I have
21 been so notified in a couple of cases and I have straightened
22 it out. Not from the White House, however.

23 MR. THIMMESCH: General Saxbe, what was your reaction to
24 not being consulted by the White House on the Nixon pardon
25 decision?

1 GENERAL SAXBE: Well, really I didn't feel that that was
2 necessarily a legal matter. It was a matter of compassion, one
3 that President Ford struggled with mightily. It had no legal
4 connotations except in the result of it, but not whether to
5 or not to.

6 MR. THIMMESCH: How about not being consulted about the
7 matter of the Nixon papers being turned over to the Special
8 Prosecutor?

9 GENERAL SAXBE: The Nixon papers being turned over to
10 the Special Prosecutor? We have been working very closely
11 on working this arrangement out with the Special Prosecutor
12 in the last few weeks. In fact, it has taken a great deal of
13 our time in trying to work out an arrangement, the arrangement
14 which is now in effect.

15 MR. NEWMAN: Your question was about the original agree-
16 ment?

17 MR. THIMMESCH: That is correct.

18 GENERAL SAXBE: To not turn them over?

19 MR. THIMMESCH: Yes.

20 GENERAL SAXBE: We were not consulted ^{at that time} on that. It has
21 since been worked out, however.

22 MR. THIMMESCH: How long do you think the Special Prose-
23 cutor's office at this point will be in business?

24 GENERAL SAXBE: Well, the very name of the Special
25 Prosecutor means he is set up for a specific purpose, which

1 is the Watergate and the campaign of 1972. When he exhausts
2 that, I would think that would terminate that.

3 MR. THIMMESCH: You couldn't give us a time --

4 GENERAL SAXBE: No. Mr. Ruth indicates he hopes to wind
5 up his affairs in the spring. It appears to me he is going to
6 have to hurry.

7 MS. LEWIS: In August of '75 the Voting Rights Act of
8 1965 will expire or portions of it. Now, the President will
9 probably turn to you for advice on the extension of the issue.
10 What is likely to be your recommendations to the President
11 concerning the extension of the Voting Rights Act?

12 GENERAL SAXBE: I will recommend to the President
13 that it should be extended.

14 MS. LEWIS: Are there any -- in your opinion are there
15 any sections that need to be strengthened?

16 GENERAL SAXBE: I think we have made some revisions
17 but no major revisions in it. We think it has worked rather
18 well.
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 MR. LESHER: General, the partial amnesty program
2 seems to be something of a failure, which justifies your own
3 prediction. I believe about a hundred men have come in,
4 draft evaders have come in out of some 6,000 cases. Now you
5 have asked for a review of these 6,000 cases with an eye
6 toward dropping non-prosecutable cases. How many cases do
7 you think will be dropped as a result of this review?

8 GENERAL SAXBE: I can't give any really sound figure
9 on this. What we are trying to do is rather to have a man
10 camped out and be afraid he is going to have to serve
11 two years, when the case against him is not any good. We
12 think that it is only fair that these cases be reviewed, and
13 he be notified and he doesn't have to go through the
14 procedure, if the case would not be a good case and probably
15 be dropped anyway.

16 Now as to the numbers that have come in, I did suggest
17 that there wouldn't be a great number because many of these people
18 have been gone five years in Canada, they have families, they
19 have jobs. They aren't likely to pick up and come back.
20 However, I do think that more will come when they realize the
21 leniency of the terms, and the number is not the important
22 thing. I think the important thing is for the country to
23 realize that the President gave them this opportunity of
24 amnesty. Whether they accept it or not, it was a generous
25 gesture and it is there.

1 MR. LESHER: General, we read a lot about a
2 potential shakeup, a coming shakeup in President Ford's
3 cabinet, and you are one of the shakeees, if you will, at
4 least in this conjecture. Do you expect to be around as
5 Attorney General by next spring?

6 GENERAL SAXBE: I am sure your guess on that would be
7 as good as mine, but I signed on this job because I had very
8 serious convictions about the future of the Justice Department
9 and law and lawyers, and I long ago decided when you undertake
10 something you stick with it. I could be turned away tomorrow,
11 but I am not going to quit.

12 MR. LESHER: Well, don't you think it might be of some
13 advantage to President Ford to try to separate himself from
14 the previous Administration, one of the ways being getting
15 his own cabinet, getting his own White House staff around him?

16 GENERAL SAXBE: That is a decision he is going to have
17 to make.

18 MR. LESHER: What do you think?

19 GENERAL SAXBE: I am not here to defend myself on
20 whether I was appointed by Mr. Nixon or Mr. Ford. It was a
21 job that I welcomed because I was worried about the Justice
22 Department, I was worried about the rule of law in this
23 country and I was worried about the attitude towards lawyers,
24 and it is my job to try to reconstruct as much as possible
25 the prestige of the Justice Department, to be fair in dealings

3 1 with the people and to get their respect and support.

2 MR. STERN: General, to what extent are Arab groups in
3 the United States, or Jewish groups, being kept under
4 surveillance?

5 GENERALSAXBE: To my knowledge, minimal. The Arab
6 terrorist groups, the ones that are recognized as such,
7 certainly are identified, at least, and we try to keep some control
8 of knowledge in the way of criminal intelligence.

9 MR. NEWMAN: We have about three minutes left.

10 MR. STERN: You have, I suspect, about a hundred
11 national security wire taps in place at any given day. Are
12 not a large portion of those taps today --

13 GENERAL SAXBE: I don't believe that is correct.

14 MR. STERN: What is the figure, then?

15 GENERAL SAXBE: I can't give it to you.

16 MR. STERN: Why not?

17 GENERAL SAXBE: Simply because it is highly classified
18 information.

19 MR. STERN: Well, at last reporting it was 109. Is
20 it fewer than that today?

21 GENERAL SAXBE: I can't comment on that.

22 MR. THIMMESCH: General Saxbe, a question about
23 politics. In view of this month's election results, what
24 do you see ahead for your Republican Party?

25 GENERAL SAXBE: Well, one of the things that I

4
1 determined to do when I got here was to stay
2 out of politics. It is one of the gratifying things to me that
3 during this last campaign, which was pretty heated, the
4 Justice Department or myself was never mentioned. I think
5 the Justice Department should be divorced from politics. If
6 Watergate taught us anything, we should stay out of it.
7 So the only race that I really took an active interest in was
8 my son running for the legislature back in Ohio.

9 MR. THIMMESCH: How did he come out?

10 GENERAL SAXBE: He won.

11 MR. THIMMESCH: You must have some philosophical
12 notions about this. You went through the 1964-65 period --

13 GENERAL SAXBE: Yes, I do, but I try to keep them to
14 myself.

15 MS. LEWIS: In '69 you expressed fear that the United
16 States was becoming militant -- militaristic, and a national
17 security state. Do you still entertain such fears?

18 GENERAL SAXBE: I am very much disturbed and I am
19 doing everything I can within the Justice Department to see
20 that we do not contribute to this attitude. I think that
21 again, the best way we can prevent this happening in our
22 country is to not have a national police force, to be very
23 vigilant on what powers we give up to anybody.

24 MR. NEWMAN: We are under one minute.

25 MR. LESHER: You have launched an investigation of

5 1 the food industry, General. Can you tell us if there are
2 any cases of criminality in the soaring prices of food?

3 GENERAL SAXBE: We haven't detected any as yet. We
4 know there is a tremendous markup, that there is a gap between
5 the packer and the meat counter, but we haven't found any
6 conspiracy and under the Sherman Act that is what we have to find
7 and that is what we are looking for.

8 MR. STERN: Are you about to relax the laws, or
9 your position on marijuana?

10 GENERAL SAXBE: No, I am not, but we do have selective
11 enforcement whether you recognize it or not, because the
12 courts are just so crowded. There has never been a
13 country able to handle hashish. It is a dangerous drug
14 and I for one would not recommend a change, but --

15 MR. NEWMAN: I must cut off there, Mr. Saxbe, because
16 our time is up. Thank you for being with us today on
17 MEET THE PRESS.

18 * * * *

19 (Next week: Mme. Francoise Giroud.

20 the new Secretary of State for Women's
21 Affairs in the French government.

22 - - - -
23
24
25