

SECChronicle
Security Firm's Boss
Is Nixon Tape Adviser

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Washington

Allan D. Bell, president of Dekor Counterintelligence and Security, Inc. is apparently the man President Nixon's special counsel relied on when he said Sunday that the 18 1/2-minute gap in a Watergate tape was probably caused by a defective recording machine.

Bell, an electronics and counterintelligence expert, told the New York Times yesterday that he had volunteered to help Charles S. Rhyne, a lawyer for Mr. Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods.

He produced a five-page report on January 29 for Rhyne, who said yesterday that he thought it was "so important" that he sent copies to U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, the White House and special watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

The Bell report appears to contradict the findings of a panel of experts that were widely interpreted as indicating that the erasures on the recording were deliberate.

Bell said yesterday that "we are involved" and "probably the source" of a portion of the statement issued Sunday by James D. St. Clair, Mr. Nixon's special counsel for the Watergate affair.

However, he said he had not talked directly to St. Clair.

The St. Clair statement said in part that "our technical investigation" of the 18 1/2-minute buzzing "has determined that the erase marks" identified by the pa-

nel of experts in the gap could well have been and

probably were caused by the "admittedly defective recording machine" that Miss Woods used.

An attempt to reach the President's lawyer at the White House yesterday was unavailing. An aide said the Bell report had been received.

The panel of experts that St. Clair referred to are the six men chosen jointly by the White House and Jaworski. They were appointed by Judge Sirica last November 16 to study the authenticity and integrity of seven tape recordings produced by subpoena from the White House.

In Bell's analysis, he noted that the experts had found a defective part in Miss Woods's recorder — a diode called a bridge rectifier.

This part, he said, might have produced the marks on the tape recording that were identified as at least five separate erasures and re-recordings in the buzzing gap.

The panel unanimously reported that it thought the erase and record marks required "hand operation of keyboard controls" on Miss Woods's tape recorder. The panel's reported suggested deliberate erasure and re-recording of the tape.

Bell's analysis suggests an accidental cause.

The panel reported that the part in question had ap-

parently caused the buzzing sound. It eventually failed and had to be replaced.

Only one of the six experts reached by the Times would comment on Bell's report, which he said he had not yet seen.

When the report was outlined to him by telephone, the expert, who asked not to be identified, commented:

"If you had the full story in your hands, you might choose to underplay the Bell report."

New York Times