

Can't remember things like these less than 3 weeks later?

Haldeman Amends Testimony

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Former White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman has sent the Senate select Watergate committee through one of his attorneys a formal correction of details of his testimony concerning how he received tapes of conversations involving President Nixon.

One member of the committee, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), said yesterday that the letter "supports my doubts" about whether the tapes have remained intact because the security of the tapes was not as certain as the committee had been told.

Haldeman told the committee during his testimony on July 31 and Aug. 1 that he had listened to two tape recordings of conversations Mr. Nixon held with White House counsel John W. Dean III on Sept. 15, 1972, and March 21, 1973.

Both the committee and special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox have subpoenaed several of the tapes from President Nixon, pro-

voking a history-making constitutional confrontation. Mr. Nixon has refused to turn over the tapes sought and the matter is now before Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

In an Aug. 10 letter to committee chairman Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) from Frank Strickler, one of Haldeman's attorneys, Strickler told Ervin that Haldeman "believes" that on July 10, 1973, he received the Sept. 15, 1972 tape "plus phone call tapes for that day" from White House aide Steve Bull while at the home of White House aide Lawrence Higby.

Haldeman had told the committee that he received the tapes from Bull in an Executive Office Building office that Haldeman was allowed to use while in Washington in early July. Haldeman resigned on April 30. He also told the committee he had listened to the March 21 tape in mid-April, while he was still chief of staff, at Mr. Nixon's request.

Strickler's letter, agreeing with Haldeman's testi-

mony, states that Haldeman did not play the telephone tapes but that he did listen to the Sept. 15 tape. "After listening to the tape, he placed the tapes and the (tape recording) machine in the case and left same in his closet," Strickler wrote, again agreeing with Haldeman's testimony.

On July 11, Strickler said, Bull delivered tapes of Mr. Nixon's meetings on three other dates to Haldeman although Haldeman "is not sure what the other dates were."

Strickler said that as Haldeman testified, he took those tapes but did not listen to any of them. "On July 12, 1973, Mr. Haldeman put the tapes in the manila envelope into the case with the machine and other tapes and returned the whole package to Steve Bull, who he thinks picked up the case at the Executive Office Building.

Asked in a telephone interview whether Haldeman was uncertain if he gave the tapes back to Bull or whether Haldeman was uncertain only about where he was

when he gave the tapes to Bull. Strickler said, "I think he (Haldeman) knows that he gave them to Mr. Bull but is a trifle uncertain as to where."

Strickler said he had not anticipated that Haldeman would be questioned about how he had received the tapes and had not prepared for "these lines" of inquiry. After Haldeman finished testifying, Strickler said he "cross examined" Haldeman about the tapes and then sent the correction because "we want the record absolutely clear."

Inouye, who had questioned Haldeman closely during the hearings about how he had received the tapes and kept them while they were in his custody, said that Strickler's letter "raises some doubts . . . If this were a court where the tapes were used as evidence, I could see a lawyer come up to question whether these are the same tapes."

Inouye said he was referring to the legal rule requiring a lawyer introducing evidence to establish that the evidence has not been

on Tapes

altered between the time an incident occurred and the time the evidence is offered in court.

Whether Haldeman was uncertain only about where he gave Bull the tapes back or whether Haldeman was uncertain that Bull had received the tapes back was not the essential point, Inouye said. "Whatever it is, there are a lot of question marks and a defense attorney would be drilling a lot of holes if this were a criminal case."