

1/17/74

Dear Barry,

A little arithmetic with Rose Mary's baby can indicate it ran almost exactly full term - and not one minute longer.

She got the machine about 1, loaded and played it, and saw Nixon at 2:08. She had a five-minute phone conversation (if with whom was reported I do not recall) and played the tape an unreported number of times. It lasts approximately 20 minutes, counting threading.

If the Uher has a counter, that simplified things but with one playing and slight care in rewinding the same thing is possible by using small slips of paper to mark the beginning and ending of the footage of interest.

If her intent was to erase and if the tape had never been played by anyone before, there was time for three playings, one to spot the beginning and ending of the part of be erased, once to do it and once to be sure it was done.

If she made any transcript at all, I do not recall seeing it reported. If she did not, then she had another purpose in using the foot-control: instant control with the hands occupied.

If she kept her foot on the control throughout that conversation - and nobody could get flustered enough to keep the machine running against interest through such a contortion - the one purpose it could have served was to keep the erasing going. \*\*\*

It can work out with three runnings of the tape. Two are ample for this purpose.

Without specific knowledge that it happened, I am certain that Haddeman saw Nixon alone before the others met with them 6/20/72. Confirming is one of my interests in seeing his notes. The need could have been met in a couple of minutes.

This is also the kind of thing that could account for the startings and stoppings indicated by the experts.

If I were looking into this I would wonder why a Uher of all the good machines available and whether, outside the recording installation, there was another one, not necessarily but preferably of that model.

One of the variables in the good but less expensive machines is in the counters. With the Uher, which is used extensively professionally, I understand the counters are dependable, consistent from machine to machine.

If this machine has a counter and if someone else had gone over the tape earlier and noted where each segment begins, (mis)using it with a duplicate machine thereafter would have been child's play.

---

\*\* Her familiarity with tape recorders, all of which work in essentially the same way, can be presumed from her long-time confidential relationship with the modest man who was not content to have every word recorded but made special notes of the most memorable of the memorable by dictating them to a machine. He may have had more of them than he had bugs. Pat is authority for the allegation that he "slept with one, one that beat her time. So, only if she was determined not to miss ~~xxxxxx~~ erasing anything would Rose Mary have any reason for keeping her foot on the foot control and for the contortion. She had to know that lifting her foot would stop the erasing. Moving it at all would require going back to that point and re-erasing. (Did it happen anyway - five times?) Strong springs keep the control in the "off" position. Fairly strong pressure is required to keep it "on."

Her initial story at best is hard to believe. That many coincidences?

But if there is no transcript at all- not even the beginning of one, what then?

I think it would be interesting if some reporter were to ask the White House how much of the tape had been transcribed before the disaster.

She could not begin to make a transcript without typing a heading. She did not have to have the machine running for that. So, at the very least, if she had been supposed to type a transcript, she should have started page identifying what should have followed.

If she made any transcript at all, it is covered by subpoena.

If she made no transcript, it is outlawed by the law of probability.

Even this White House might be embarrassed to say that it has something remaining that was covered by subpoena and was not turned over. Especially if asked.

But if they do not have they not made an already impossible story even more impossible?

I do not recall any reporting that takes cognizance of the certainty that she is at least familiar with tape recorders. My hunch is that she has more than average familiarity. We tend to make the (sexist?) assumption that all women are mechanically inept. Especially after the allegation of that ludicrous stretch.

The first time my wife ever transcribed taped notes was the first time she touched a tape recorder. She did a third of a million words of them, the initial backstopping of my first book, without once erasing anything.

I hope you folks at the Post will do all you can to help Rose Mary with her baby.

Doesn't every baby deserve a father?

Best regards,