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clippings/filed w/gate

Oval Office 'bug,' 1970 - WXP, AP and UPI report on an article by Tad Szulc, written for July issue of Penthouse Magazine. The account by WXP begins, "Penthouse Magazine said [today] ... " which suggests these reports are based on an advance authorized by the magazine.

Szulc's article says a sophisticated laser beam transmitter, hidden in a wall of the Oval Office and concealed beneath a coat of fresh paint, was removed in early Aug 70. The device was "apparently controlled by one of the intelligence agencies," and was installed by a foreign-born painter employed by the government, whose name is known to Szulc. "Szulc said ... the device ..., unlike a tape system, could identify every individual voice in the room as well as several separate simultaneous conversations, [and] picked up all telephone conversations, including those made over 'secure' scrambler lines." The operation was code-named "Easy Chair."

Most of the preceding was taken from WXP; see clippings for other details.

WXP says the Oval Office was bugged "before August, 1970," AP, "for several months in 1970," UPI, "for several months in 1970 [and] was discovered and removed in early August, 1970." The use of the phrase "for several months" suggests there was some knowledge of the time the bug was in place.

Nixon, at press conference 22 Aug 73, said that after he had the WH "taping capacity" dismantled when he took office, it was "put into place again in June of 1970." For correction of the year to 1971, see entry 22 Aug 73, p. 2, Nixon press conference; entry 15 JUL 73, p. 25; also notes of Butterfield, who made the same error.

WXP 21 Apr 75, Austin Scott

NYT 21 Apr 75 [UPI]

SPC 21 Apr 75 [AP]