

# The Pres

## The President's Nocturnal Tapings

By Maxine Cheshire

Even before President Nixon installed all those super-sensitive bugging devices in other rooms of the White House, he kept a tape recorder by his bedside.

According to First Lady Pat Nixon, the gadget disturbed her rest and made her decide to occupy a bedroom.

"I'll have to have a room of my own," she told staff members when the Nixons were moving into the Executive Mansion during the inaugural week of 1969. "Nobody could sleep with Dick. He wakes up during the night, switches on the lights and speaks into his tape recorder or takes notes. It's impossible."

President Nixon's nocturnal taping habits are revealed in the memoirs of former usher J. Bernard West, which will be published by Coward-McCann next month under the title: "Upstairs At the White House."

It was West who took the Nixons on their first tour of the private quarters they would be occupying in the years ahead. According to West's account, the President seemed concerned about being bugged himself.

Peeking underneath the bed which had been occupied previously by LBJ and JFK, President Nixon was highly suspicious of a "cat's cradle of electric wires" he found there, says West.

"What on earth is all this?" he demanded.

West informed him that the tangle of wiring was necessary for the elaborate console phone system, tape recorders, remote television controls for three sets "and heaven knows what else."

"I don't want any of that under here," the President replied. "Take it all out, whatever it is."

The wires were removed. So was the massive canopy bed occupied by Mr. Nixon's Democratic predecessors. Mrs. Nixon went to the storeroom and found for him the simple double bed which President Eisenhower had used.