

How to Handle Sticky Tapes



Arthur Hoppe

IT WAS in mid-October that the White House finally gave up its battle with the courts and released 183 Watergate tapes.

In a brilliant public relations gesture, the tapes were released in the form of an LP album, produced by John Ehrlichman and edited (solely for national security reasons) by H. R. Haldeman.

Critics agreed that the first tape on the album, if somewhat scratchy in places, was by far the most interesting.

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IT OPENS with a rousing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. A woman's voice then says, "There goes your alarm, dear, time to get up."

Man's Voice: Yes, by golly, it's 5 a.m. Time to start another day striving to build a better world for all Americans. But first, I want to make one tooth perfectly clean at a time. (Sounds of brushing teeth.)

Woman's Voice: I couldn't sleep a wink worrying about Watergate.

Man's Voice: I'll never get caught (click-bleep) with bad breath. What is a Watergate?

Woman's Voice: There've been leaks in the papers about it for six months, dear.

Man's Voice: Leaks? Call in my plumbers! I want them to break into (click-bleep) the trap on this sink. It seems to be stopped up. As to the papers, you know I've been too busy to read them, what with creating a lasting peace for future generations 24 hours a day.

Woman's Voice: Yes, dear. But they say your top aides are involved in illegal activities.

Man's Voice: They'll never get caught (click-bleep) unless I make every known fact public immediately. Call my honest, trustworthy young legal counsel as I jog in place while singing "America, The Beautiful." (He sings.)

Young Man's Voice: You wanted to see me, sir?

Man's Voice: Yes, John. I wanted to tell you what a good job you're doing supervising the cover up (click-bleep) of the tulip beds in the Rose Garden.

Young Man's Voice: Thank you, sir. But we'll need another million dollars. There is a growing cancer (click).

Man's Voice: Raising a million dollars will be easy (click-bleep) to fight cancer. The health of every American is a matter of deep concern to me 24 hours a day.

Young Man's Voice: Yes, sir. They also demand a guarantee of an executive pardon (click-bleep) me. Was I standing on your foot?

Man's Voice: I see no serious difficulty there. Certainly, in view of the services rendered, I'll be glad to pardon (click-bleep) you.

Young Man's Voice: I should also confess, sir, that John and Bob and I have all been obstructing just . . . (click-bleep) as much we can, the evil forces that have been causing rising food prices.

Man's Voice: Don't worry. Nobody around here is going to get caught (click-bleep) not doing his best to protect the American consumer 24 hours a day. Thank you for your efforts to hide (click-bleep) not a single fact from the public.

Woman's Voice: Oh, dear. I won't sleep a single wink tonight now that I know all these terrible . . . (click-bleep) . . . wonderful things you and your honest staff are doing for every American 24 hours a day.

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THE OTHER 182 tapes on the record all begin, "And a one, and a two and a three . . ." and appear to be the collected works of Lawrence Welk.

The album, which conclusively proved the innocence of every member of the White House staff, immediately went on sale in stores across the nation. Unfortunately, nobody bought it.