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Prosecutor Finds New Gap In Tapes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Assistant special Watergate prosecutor Richard Ben Veniste said today another gap had been discovered in White House recordings of presidential conversations.

In a hearing before U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, Ben Veniste mentioned the gap in

asking the court for an order directing the White House to begin indexing and to take precautions to observe various White House tapes relating to the Watergate case.

"We have learned that one of the tapes contains almost a 19-minute gap," Ben Veniste said.

Ben Veniste made no further mention of the damaged tapes and would not elaborate after court. However, he said the tape with the 19-minute gap was not one of those being subpoenaed by the prosecutor's office for use in the Watergate case.

Sirica did not issue the order Ben Veniste asked, but he did order the record of Thursday's hearing over a tape dispute forwarded to the Supreme Court which is studying the question of whether the President has to release tapes and other Watergate evidence.