

P.S. Later 11/3/73

All the news to which I've had access, with the Post's strike, is the AP "B" wire in the local paper and the 8 a.m. CBS bet radio news. What they report is entirely consistent with my suggestions.

As reported, Bull's testimony is what I take to be deliberately evasive. In the light of it and other news reported, I strongly believe that a critical re-reading of Haldeman's might be productive, beginning with his volunteered info about having heard the tapes. As I recall it, he does not address the existence of the 4/15 tape. Rather he says merely that he did not listen to it. With Dean's credibility the issue, there is no possibility he would have avoided playing it, assuming no perjury, if it existed. Assuming the integrity of Dean's version and recalling the message to Nixon via "igby", I would also postulate that Nixon could have known his main taping system was "inoperative" and that he had an auxiliary one within the room.

Actually, dependable ones of this character are inexpensive. I have often thought of equipping one of mine for such use but I didn't because my purposes, which would not be sneaky, could be misconstrued. (My concern is over the ham in witnesses when they see a mike.) From my experience with one police department, in which I then used a jerry-rigged attache-case standard, inexpensive recorder, the results are dependable in even a noisy environment. So, if Nixon had one in an attache case, he'd have a secret one of which his own staff would not know. This could make sense of Dean's description, for the pickup range of such an arrangement is more limited. A machine like my Sony TC 40 need not be hidden, would be silent, and would not be detected if any case were taken in placing it. It could go for an hour on drug-store supplies.

Bull's offer, or the lawyers, of Nixon's tape-recorded comments fascinates. If made after he "discovered" that the tape does not exist, they are no more meaningful than any other recollection of more than a year later. If made earlier, why would he have made them when he had the tape, unless he knew he did not have the tape? This suggests what I suggested earlier, that knowing he did not want his system to record what he and Dean discussed, he had it off. I believe this is an alternative to deliberate destruction, for I do not believe the malfunction contrivance.

Given what is involved, it does not seem unreasonable to wonder if the "aldeman audition, which comes at a time that makes it possible, was really a device for enabling the disappearance of the crucial tapes. Haldeman was ~~avgue~~ ^{missing} on those he had.

If my recollection of Haldeman's testimony is correct, Nixon had heard these tapes (dates unspecified) before asking Haldeman to listen to them, which he did twice. If Dean's testimony is truthful ~~the tapes~~ ^{missing} convict Nixon of a crime. Can it be believed that of all the tapes this one would not be listened to by both Nixon and Haldeman? (When I first heard the Haldeman testimony, I felt that the real purpose of his listening to the tapes was to cue him in.) Or, given the burning White House desire to get Dean, if the tape made a perjurer of him, it would not have been used?

There is another explanation of the Part 1 than Bull offered. If it was a dub onto 5" reels to fit a portable machine that does not take 7" reels, the boxes of 5" reels would be properly identified. And if the original reel was more than 7" or if there were more than one 7" reel, then there would be more than two parts to the ~~im~~ dubs. I see no reason to assume original taping on 5" reels, every reason to assume other than 5" reels, and thus would suspect that if 5" reels are delivered to the court they are not originals, another reason for knowing what equipment is used in the total installation. With retrieval a problem in such volume, I would expect the gadgetry to include commercial radio cuing machines, fast-players. Perhaps even timers.