

Tapes Show 3 Trans

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Tapes played in the Watergate cover-up trial have shown the White House edited the transcripts it made public last spring to omit three significant segments in which then-President Richard M. Nixon talked about payments to the bugging defendants.

In each case, the portions were left out of the transcripts sent to the House Judiciary Committee, and the White House instead marked them as "material unrelated to President's actions deleted."

But the actual tapes yesterday repeated Nixon's voice in confirming he had discussed payments for convicted burglar E. Howard Hunt Jr. with White House counsel John W. Dean III, worrying about how to explain the money, and saying, "That, of course, indicates knowledge."

Another tape showed Nixon discussing clemency for the Watergate group with former chief of staff, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, who interjected, "It's gotta be down the road."

But Haldeman's response had also been left out of the White House version when Nixon announced last April 29 he was sending transcripts of the tapes to the House impeachment inquiry.

ALTHOUGH ALL of the nine tapes played at the cover-up trial yesterday had been made public before — at least in part — they did reveal an extensive laundering

by the White House of its own transcripts last spring.

At one stage, Nixon referred to himself apparently as "the king of the mountain."

And then he went on immediately to mention "trying to keep, uh, suppress the facts and so forth."

The nine tapes were recorded in a four-day period around the second weekend of April 1973, when Nixon and his aides were struggling to handle a collapse of their Watergate barricades, as Dean and others began to tell their tales to the prosecution.

Haldeman, former Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell, former aide John D. Ehrlichman, and two other defendants are on trial for conspiracy in the Watergate cover-up. Nixon, pardoned two months ago by President Ford, is still being sought as a witness.

Nixon's attorney, Herbert J. Miller, told U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica yesterday that the head of the panel of three judges named to examine the former president after his recent surgery would begin going through the medical records in California on Monday.

"They can even examine the body," added Miller.

THE ATTORNEY also suggested the doctors could call in consultants, "including a psychologist." He did not elaborate on that.

Nixon's mention of money for Hunt had taken place in an earlier meeting with Dean on March 21, 1973, when, as the Ju-

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diciary Committee evidence from the tapes later showed, the president told Dean, "Well, for Christ's sakes, get it."

Less than a month later, in a segment omitted from the White House transcripts, Nixon suggested a line of defense to Ehrlichman on April 14 that he wanted his aides to take:

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TRIAL

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"They've gotta have a straight damn line that, of course we raised the money. Be very honest about it. But, uh, we raised the money for a purpose that we thought was perfectly proper. . . . We weren't trying to shut them up . . . we didn't want 'em to talk to the press."

Two days later, remembering his talk with Dean, Nixon said to Haldeman and Ehrlichman, "Only one point that, uh, occurs to me that, uh, that, he did discuss with me the, this need, for funds for Hunt."

Ehrlichman then retraced Hunt's threat and said of Dean, "He went back to Mitchell, apparently, because the next thing I knew about it, we had a meeting in Bob's office about something else and Mitchell came in and Mitchell said I've taken care of it."

That discussion occurred in a four-page segment of an April 16 tape that had been left out of the White House transcript with a notation: "Material unrelated to Presidential actions deleted."

NIXON RETURNED to the subject of money only a day later to tell Haldeman a better explanation would be needed than the effort to keep the Watergate burglars from talking to the press.

Again, in a White House-deleted section, Nixon said, "I don't know what in the hell the strategy is, I think

you ought to talk about that, but, uh, I'm a little concerned about that last bite or two, the 127. . . ."

From the context of the tapes, that was a reference again to Hunt's pressure for \$127,000 just before his sentencing.

After Haldeman replied that was something Mitchell indicated the next day that he was taking care of, Nixon said:

"(Unintelligible). On the other hand, that, of course, indicates knowledge and so forth."

Haldeman said, "That's right."

It is unknown who edited the transcripts in the White House last spring and deleted the material from what Nixon described to a national television audience

as the full story of the tapes.

Other segments heard at the trial, but left out of the White House transcripts:

● Nixon quoted Dean at one point as having reported on Watergate, "As far as anybody on the White House staff, nobody had any pre-knowledge. He said, yeah, the vulnerability is in terms of the after-effect." That had been worded instead in the White House transcript to say, "Nobody got anything out of it."

● Ehrlichman informed Nixon that some of the bugging done on newsmen in his first year had been handled outside FBI channels. Ehrlichman's comment that they were not solely FBI taps had been omitted in the transcript.

● Nixon reacted angrily to

the warning that Dean was talking to prosecutors in another deleted section, saying, "If he, uh, he gets a cop-out, he's gonna, he's gonna be dead. . . . You can't have him around here with the kind of stuff he's going to cop-out about."

● Nixon used earthy language, often humorously, in places where the White House blue-penciled its version. At one point in the transcripts, Nixon said aide Charles W. Colson could be involved "up to his navel." The tapes placed the point of Colson's peril at an aft part of his anatomy.