

David Selvin, Pacifica, Washington:

..... [Rose Mary]

In the courtroom with Woods today were her White typewriter, one of the lamps from her desk, the tape recorder which supposedly erased the 18-minute portion of tape, and a series of photographs taken yesterday afternoon in her White House office.

The photographs show Woods at her desk, reaching for the telephone behind her, as she apparently had on October the 1st, when, she testified, she accidentally pressed the "record" button on her tape recorder while simultaneously depressing the foot pedal beneath her desk, all of which seemingly caused the 18-minute gap.

From this reporter's observation of those photographs, they seem to demonstrate that Woods could not have taken her telephone off the receiver without taking her foot off the foot pedal. Although she could easily have talked on the telephone while keeping her foot depressed on the pedal, she would have had to make a concerted effort to do the same while picking up the phone. Furthermore, based on the measurements made of her desk and typewriter table by prosecutors yesterday, simple geometry would show that the approximate distance between her telephone and the foot pedal was 8½ feet. Woods is approximately 5 foot 6 inches in height.

This apparent discrepancy between her testimony and physical probability was pursued this afternoon by assistant prosecutor Jill Volner.

[Selvin, reading:]

"Volner: Did you move your chair in order to answer the telephone?"

"Woods: Yes.

"Was it necessary for you to roll your chair?"

"Yes.

"While rolling your chair your foot remained on the pedal?"

"That is correct.

"Is it comfortable for you to keep your foot on the pedal and answer the phone at the same time?"

"Woods: It is not comfortable answering thousands of telephone calls. This was the first time I erased the tape.

"Did you not tell President Nixon immediately afterwards that you had erased the tape?"

"I told him the 'erase' button was depressed. Again, I was not on the phone for 18 minutes, it was more like 4 or 5 minutes.

"Immediately after the telephone call did you realize what you had done?"

"Yes.

"Did you not stop the machine?"

"Yes, I turned it off."

At that point Volner introduced Exhibit No. 78, a photograph of Woods in her office, reaching for the telephone.

"Volner: I see you had to hold on to your chair in order to reach the telephone.

"Woods: I don't call that holding.

"Volner: You're shoving away from the tape recorder.

"That's right."

Woods said Volner had asked her to pose for the photograph. Volner responded by saying she had not. Sirica interrupted, saying, "We have enough problems without two ladies getting into an argument."

"Volner: It is not impossible, in fact, for you to reach the telephone without holding on to the chair.

"Woods: No, it isn't."

[Selvin goes on to another facet of the hearing.]

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