

Nixon Office 'Bug'  
in '70 is Reported

Device Involved Laser  
Beam, Magazine  
Article Says

By United Press International

President Nixon's office in the White House was bugged with a laser beam transmitting device for several months in 1970, "apparently" by an American intelligence agency, according to an article prepared for the July issue of Penthouse magazine.

The article, by Tad Szulc, says the device was a tiny transmitter embedded in the wall of the office and concealed by a coat of fresh paint. Mr. Szulc wrote that the device was installed by a foreign-born painter employed by the Federal Government "and apparently controlled by one of the intelligence agencies."

The article quotes "highly reliable sources" as saying that senior officials of the Secret Service and the Central Intelligence Agency were "familiar" with the device, although they could not say whether these agencies learned of the "bug" only when it was discovered and removed in early August, 1970, or whether they knew of it earlier. The sources said they would not rule out that the late J. Edgar Hoover, then director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, knew of its existence.

The article says the bugging operation was code-named "Easy Chair" and that its transmissions were relayed "to a point somewhere within one-half mile of the White House—the effective range of the transmitter." It says the bug was extremely sophisticated and permitted the identification of all voices and also of several simultaneous conversations.

Mr. Szulc said it was not known whether Mr. Nixon was aware of the bug.

**Secret Service Comment**  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 20—A spokesman for the Secret Service said today that officials of the agency knew of no installation such as the one described in the Penthouse article and that "we do not believe such a system could be installed in the Oval Office without our knowledge." The spokesman added that the agency had never heard the allegations until excerpts from the article were read to officials over the telephone.