

Watergate Data Stolen

By Jim Landers

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Five cassette tape recordings and a folder of notes containing "politically sensitive" information relating to the Watergate investigation have been stolen from the Washington office of an ABC newsman, the network said yesterday.

The tapes and folder were stolen from the third-floor office of ABC news correspondent Bill Gill at the ABC building, 1124 Connecticut Ave. NW, earlier this month and discovered missing Aug. 10, according to network representatives.

"Two of those tapes are damn sensitive politically," Gill said in a telephone interview from Miami last night.

He said they related to recent ABC news broadcasts in which it was said that the Senate Watergate committee has issued subpoenas in connection with reports of illegal campaign funds.

ABC has said committee informants have claimed that illegal contributions of more than \$2 million were channeled to President Nixon's campaign through gambling casinos in the Bahamas and several Miami area banks.

Gill said two of the missing tapes contained "conversations I recorded with sources close to the Watergate investigation that named names and dates" of campaign activities and contributions in the 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns.

Gill said the office door and his desk were both locked when he left work for the day on Wednesday, Aug. 8.

Also taken from Gill's desk, he said, were two tape recorders, a portable radio, and an unopened fifth of bourbon. Gill, who shares the office with ABC White House correspondent Tom Jarriel, said Jarriel's desk had not been tampered with.

Gill said the five tapes and one of the tape recorders were inside a locked drawer of his desk. The folder containing some of his notes was in a letter rack on top of the desk, he said.

He said that the only notes missing were those that related to Watergate. "There were some notes on other political scandals in the letter rack, none of which was stolen," he said.

John Lynch, manager of the Washington ABC news bureau, said security guards at the building found a fire escape leading to the third floor had been tampered with on the night of Aug. 8. The guards found nothing else unusual about the incident at the time, he said.

Washington police said that a burglary at the ABC office has been reported to them. However, a full police report was not available last night.