

SFE Examiner

*Where exactly are the tapes?*

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Although President Nixon has said he has taken personal custody of the tape recordings sought by Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox, their precise location — and the manner in which they are guarded — remains as classified as their content.

A top White House aide would acknowledge only that the tapes are somewhere in the executive mansion. "They are secure," he said, "but I can't give you any more detail than that."

The original custodian was the Secret Service, which had operational control of the recording system attached to the presidential offices and telephones. According to the White House, that system was dismantled shortly after it came to public light in testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee.

Officials now leave unanswered whether agents still are keeping special watch over the tapes. The Secret Service is responsible for general security throughout the White House.