

Nixon 'Offered' The Missing Tape

Washington

President Nixon once offered to let Assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen listen to one of the missing Watergate tapes, according to Petersen.

Mr. Nixon told Petersen on April 18 that he had a tape recording of a crucial April 15 meeting between him and then White House counsel John Dean III. Later that day, according to informed sources, Mr. Nixon denied to Petersen that such a tape existed.

Petersen, who was in charge of the original Justice Department investigation of the Watergate affair, told the Senate Watergate committee on August 7,

"The President called me, I recall it was in middle or late afternoon (April 18) and said that Dean had said he had been immunized" from prosecution.

Petersen said he disputed this, checked with the case prosecutors and "when I called the President back, I told him that. He said, 'Well, you know, I have it on tape if you want to hear it.'"

Petersen later discussed the matter further with the President, according to the sources, and Mr. Nixon said that there must have been a "misunderstanding" because he had a written record or memo of the conversation — but not a tape recording.

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