

David Selvin, Pacifica, WX:

Although Judge John Sirica did not hold hearings on the Watergate tapes today, the court did release evidence which would indicate there may be further technical problems with two or more of the tapes, tapes which, according to the prosecutors, could show whether or not Nixon was involved in the Watergate cover-up.

The evidence released by the court were two hand-written notes taken by Gen. John Bennett, the deputy to Nixon's chief-of-staff Alexander Haig, which showed there were, quote, "two aborts" on the tapes of conversations between Nixon and his former counsel, John Dean. Those tapes were made on September the 15th and March the 13th of this year. Dean told the Senate Watergate committee that on both those occasions he discussed the cover-up with Nixon. Anyway, the word "abort" was not explained, although Bennett's notes showed that while laboratory technicians were making copies of the two tapes, the two tapes were, quote, "tested unsuccessfully." The same notes indicate, quote, "Did test in R's office. No joy." Further, on November the 14th Bennett wrote that he entered the White House vault and, quote, "deposited three aborted tapes, extracted briefcase of contents except three aborts left in safe."

When the hearings on the tapes resume next Tuesday [4 Dec], Bennett and Haig will both be witnesses.

In other related news, Rufus Edmisten, Sam Ervin's legislative assistant and a counsel for the Senate Watergate committee, said today that the committee intends to subpoena a 12-hour-long tape recording made by Nixon on May the 4th of this year. The tape, according to Edmisten, was a compilation made by Nixon of all the other subpoenaed tapes. The tape, again according to Edmisten, contained the 18-minute portion of tape supposedly obliterated by Nixon's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods.

Nixon spokesman Gerald Warren today denied that any such tape had been made, saying, quote, "It appears old Rufus has been down there in Sweetbriar (where Edmisten made his remarks) misleading those nice ladies."

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