

# NBC Report on Nixon Tape Gap

New York

NBC News says an expert hired by the White House will agree with the conclusion of court-appointed electronics specialists that a Watergate tape with an 18½-minute gap was edited and re-recorded.

<sup>23 APR</sup> NBC newsman Carl Stern said Tuesday that the White House expert, Michael Hecker of the Stanford Research Institute, may not agree with procedures used by the other experts.

However, Stern said, Hecker will not dispute the conclusion of the six tape authorities, who said the tape underwent "the process of editing and re-recording at least five and perhaps as many as nine separate and contiguous segments."

The panel, chosen mutually by the White House and the special Watergate prosecutor, did not say if the erasure was accidental or deliberate.

But the group told U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica that "The recording controls

must have been operated by hand in the making of each segment."

Sirica also heard testimony from President Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, that she may have accidentally erased some of the tape while answering a telephone.

Stern said Hecker "expects to testify whether it helps or hurts the President, and now it looks as though it will hurt."

According to NBC, a White House spokesman said late Tuesday that nothing in Stern's story came from White House sources. There would be no further comment, the spokesman told the network.

The controversial tape is a recording of a June 20, 1972, conversation between President Nixon and his former top aide, H. R. Haldeman, that took place three days after the burglary of the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate complex.

Associated Press