

WST

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Buzhardt Says 'Swerping' Bugged the Transcribers

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter
WASHINGTON—Swerping.

That's one reason transcribers of the Watergate tapes found so much unintelligible, according to J. Fred Buzhardt, a special counsel to President Nixon.

Mr. Buzhardt explained in an interview with Westinghouse Broadcasting that the tape recorders in the White House were voice-activated. During a lull in a conversation, the recorders would stop, he said. When someone began to speak the recorders started up again, causing what he described as a "swerping" sound at the beginning.

Furthermore, Mr. Buzhardt said, President Nixon's comments were particularly hard to decipher because the President has a "bass voice."

On the other hand, John Dean came through on the tapes clear as a bell because the former White House counsel has a "nasal twang," Mr. Buzhardt said.

"There's a relationship between the depth of the voice and the fidelity of the recording," he said. "The basser tones have more distortions."