

Who Altered The Evidence?



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THERE NO LONGER can be any doubt that the White House has tampered with Watergate evidence. Not only tapes but documents have been altered by someone inside the White House.

Furthermore, our White House sources tell us that the additional 64 conversations, which the Supreme Court unanimously ordered President Nixon to turn over to Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski, contain gaps, distortions and unintelligible passages.

Many of the distortions are caused by extraneous sounds, but our sources say that some of the unexplained gaps appear to have been caused by deliberate tampering.

The suppressed tapes had been in the President's personal custody until the Supreme Court order. Then they were entrusted to the Secret Service to transcribe.

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OUR SOURCES have also furnished us with the astonishing details about a memo that clearly was doctored by the White House. This was written on Jan. 8, 1970, by former presidential aide Alexander Butterfield.

It dealt with the tapped telephone conversation of Morton Halperin, a former national security aide, who spoke on the phone about helping ex-Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford prepare a series of articles for Life magazine against the Vietnam war.

The tapped conversation was reported

to the White House by the late FBI chief, J. Edgar Hoover, on Dec. 29, 1969. H. R. Haldeman, then the White House Staff Chief, passed Hoover's wiretap report to Jeb Magruder, with instructions to prepare a "game plan" to counter the Clifford articles.

Magruder sought suggestions from Butterfield, who gave his views in the Jan. 7, 1970, memo. This memo is significant, because it proves that the wiretaps were used for political purposes. All along, the White House has been claiming that the wiretaps were ordered strictly to protect the national security.

The Butterfield memo was mysteriously altered, however, to make it appear that he had directed Magruder's operations against Clifford.

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BUTTERFIELD was hauled before the Watergate prosecutors early last January for questioning about the memo. He quickly spotted indications that it had been altered. He obtained access to his White House files and found several of his January 1970 memos missing, say our sources, including the doctored memo.

But unknown to the White House, Butterfield had kept copies of some of his papers and among them he found the January 8 memo as he had originally written it. This proved the tampering beyond any doubt.

But the big mystery is still unsolved: Who altered the memo?