

More Gaps, Distortions in Tapes

By Jack Anderson

There no longer can be any doubt that the White House has tampered with Watergate evidence. Tapes and 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, such as clanking cups, thumping feet and even martial music filtering into the Oval Office from the White House grounds. 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.

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. 8, 1970, memo. He stressed that "Al Haig can get you squared away on at least a preliminary scheme. We can build from there." Haig was then Henry Kissinger's deputy and is now Haldeman's successor as staff chief.

This memo is significant, because it proves the wiretaps were used for political purposes. All along, the White House has been claiming 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. The compromising reference to Haig was also deleted from the doctored memo.

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 Jan. 8 memo as he had origi-

nally written it. This proved the tampering beyond any doubt.

But the big mystery is still unsolved: who altered the memo? Haig might be a suspect, because the memo was changed to shift the blame from him to Butterfield. But our sources doubt this, because the two men are close personal friends.

The strange gaps in the latest 64 tapes, meanwhile, will add to the frustration of the Watergate prosecutors who still haven't been able to identify who caused the famous 18½-minute gap in an earlier tape. This obliterated Haldeman's crucial first report to the President on the Watergate break-in on June 20, 1972.

One key source believes it was significant that the President himself listened to this tape on Sept. 29, 1973, at Camp David. His secretary, Rose Mary Woods, testified before the grand jury that the President donned earphones and pushed buttons, listening to parts of the June 20 tape, while she was transcribing it. She did not suggest, however, that the President had altered the tape.

Another source pointed out that Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen, while he was in charge of the Watergate prosecution, reported to the President on April 15, 1973, that H. R. Haldeman was under investigation.

Ten days later, the President turned over several of the most crucial tapes not to Petersen, who was conducting the investi-

gation, but to Haldeman, who was under investigation.

The Watergate prosecutors still cannot pinpoint, however, who in the White House has been tampering with the tapes and documents.

Washington Whirl —Franksters recently slipped into Social and Rehabilitation Administrator James Dwight's executive bathroom and removed the lid to his commode. In its place, they installed a fire-engine red lid, emblazoned with the insignia of his favorite football team, the Southern California Trojans

... Maj. Gerald L. Radcliff, president of a Pentagon anti-iques club, has written to Washington antique dealers requesting a discount for club members. The requests were mailed at the taxpayers' expense in franked envelopes stamped "official business." ... Joe Gonzales, a Senate staff member who has been overseeing Treasury appropriations, has quietly joined the folks he used to regulate. He has accepted a \$35,000-a-year job at the Treasury ...

Celebrated classical guitarist Jean-Pierre Jumez was horrified recently when one of his students showed him a new album of Jumez's recordings. The cover featured a hairy-legged model, without pants, strumming the guitar. The album, with its streaker-like guitar player, was issued by ABC Records without so much as asking Jumez whether his legs were hairy. The outraged classicist is taking the case to court.