

JAWORSKI STUDIES 2 ALTERED MEMOS

One White House Message Known to Involve Use of Wiretap Information

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While the Watergate special prosecution has been accumulating evidence on suspicious gaps in White House tapes, they have also come across at least two instances where White House memorandums have been altered.

One memorandum that is known to be under investigation was written by Alexander Butterfield, a former White House aide to Jeb Stuart Magruder, a leader of the committee to re-elect President Nixon. It concerned the possible political use of wiretap information obtained from J. Edgar Hoover; former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The contents of the second altered memorandum are not known. Sources close to the office of Leon Jaworski, the special prosecutor, say that it was turned up in an F.B.I. investigation ordered last winter after officials learned of the original 18-minute gap in a White House tape.

The second memorandum is believed to have been cut with scissors to delete or deface certain portions, according to the sources.

According to evidence recently released by the House Judiciary Committee, the episode involving the first memorandum began in December, 1969, when Mr. Hoover wrote President Nixon a letter informing him that "extremely sensitive sources" had yielded information that Clark Clifford, former Secretary of Defense under President Johnson, was about to write a magazine article attacking Mr. Nixon's Vietnam policy.

"Sensitive Sources"

The letter containing information from the "extremely sensitive sources"—an F.B.I. euphemism during the Hoover era for wiretaps—eventually reached Mr. Magruder's desk.

Mr. Butterfield told the Judiciary Committee that at the time Mr. Magruder was working at the White House. Mr. Butterfield testified:

"He was sort of under my wing in some ways. He came to me frequently and said, 'How do I respond to' [then White House chief of staff

H. R. Haldeman's request here, 'What would you do here?' He didn't know exactly how to go about many of the projects which were given to him."

Mr. Magruder, he said, wanted to know how the White House could respond to the forthcoming Clifford article, some details of which were learned from the wiretap that was reportedly placed on the phone of Morton Halperin, a former staff member of the National Security Council.

Mr. Butterfield said he then wrote Mr. Magruder a memorandum, dated Jan. 8 1970, that said, among other things, that "Al Haig can get you squared away on at least a preliminary scheme. We can build from there." Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., was then chief aide to Henry Kissinger, then head of the National Security Council.

The way the memorandum was initially written, Mr. Butterfield later testified, it indicated that he had never seen the Hoover wiretap report, which he said was the truth.

Later, however, when he testified on that point before the staff of the special prosecutor, Mr. Butterfield was confronted with another version of the same memorandum in which the Haig reference had been deleted.

The memorandum had also been reworded slightly, he said, to indicate that Mr. Butterfield had seen the "top secret"

Hoover letter and was, himself, interested in the case.

Mr. Butterfield said he had decided the memorandum was a forgery because it contained several changes and because, although it was supposed to be four years old, "it looks as though it was typed an hour ago."

"That concerned me," Mr. Butterfield told Judiciary Committee members. "I thought, who is passing memos of mine around and purporting them to be originals when they are not?"

Mr. Butterfield said he later found a copy of the original memorandum in his personal files and gave it to the special prosecutor. It is not clear, at this point, whether the altered memorandum came from Mr. Magruder's files, which were removed from the White House, or from those which were later acquired from the White House by subpoena and request.

Mr. Magruder is now serving a 10-months to four-year term for his role in the Watergate cover-up.