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Report on the New Tape Gap

New York

Time magazine said yesterday that a five-minute, 12-second gap in a White House tape of a conversation between President Nixon and his top aides resulted from the end of one reel and the beginning of a new one being clipped.

The tape of the April 17,

1973, conversation involving Mr. Nixon and aides John Ehrlichman and H.R. Halde- man was one of 30 turned over to Judge John J. Sirica last week following a Su- preme Court ruling.

Mr. Nixon's Watergate lawyer, James St. Clair, said earlier that the gap was caused by the changing of reels. Time said that no

more than one minute was needed for the change.

Time also quoted retired Major General John G. Ben- nett, who guarded the tapes for almost a year, as saying "I have a feeling that some- where along the line some- one messed with those tapes."

Associated Press