

Dash Thinks Nixon Had Tape Erased

New York

Samuel Dash, former chief counsel to the Senate Watergate committee, says he believes President Nixon must have ordered a White House tape erased because it disproved his version of when he learned the details of the break-in.

Dash said in an interview published in People magazine that he believed the erased 18½-minutes of the tape from June 20, 1972, three days after the bungled break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters contained H.R. Haldeman's report to Mr. Nixon on the break-in.

"It had to be Haldeman telling Nixon everything he had learned from (John) Dean about the break-in; how it took place, who was involved — John Mitchell, Jeb Magruder, G. Gordon

Liddy, Dean, everybody," Dash said in the interview released yesterday.

"So that as of June 20, 1972, three days after the break-in, Nixon knew everything."

Mr. Nixon contended that he did not learn the background of the break-in until March 21, 1973.

In light of Mr. Nixon's contention, Dash said, "It would have been very damaging for him to reveal that he knew about the whole thing three days afterward. He must have made a decision to erase it."

Dash said that although his committee did not investigate the question of who caused the 18½-minute tape gap, he believed a number of persons had been suspected by the prosecutors.

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