

Nixon Doctored Tape Transcripts

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

One question mark has continued to hang over the Watergate scandals: who doctored the White House transcripts? We have now established that the culprit was none other than Richard Nixon himself.

On April 29, 1974, President Nixon made a dramatic television appearance to announce he would release the transcripts. This was intended to head off the growing demands for access to his controversial White House tapes.

The House Judiciary Committee, however obtained the tapes and compared them to the Nixon transcripts. Counsel John Doar found the transcripts "not accurate."

Mysterious gaps appeared in the transcripts where there were none on the tapes. Strange distortions put words in Nixon's mouth that couldn't be heard on the tapes. And passages, which were deleted from the transcripts as "unintelligible," turned out to be perfectly clear on the tapes.

The ex-President's loyal, professorial attorney, Fred Buzhardt, was widely blamed for the misrepresentations. But sources with direct knowledge of what happened have told us that Nixon personally altered the incriminating transcripts.

After White House stenographers finished transcribing the tapes, Buzhardt carefully listened to many of

them through headsets. He did his best to correct the mistakes of the stenographers and to make the transcripts as accurate as possible.

Some of the passages were damaging to his eminent client, so he discussed the most disastrous parts with the President. Listening in dismay, Nixon kept mumbling, "It didn't happen like that," and other similar comments.

Then to Buzhardt's absolute amazement, the President excised material to make the transcripts conform to his own version to what happened. He disregarded the clear evidence of the tapes and Buzhardt's own scrupulous inspection.

As Nixon edited the damaging passages, he dismissed some of the changes and deletions with the cryptic explanation: "It was unrelated to presidential action."

The tension of representing a man he knew to be dishonest helped to break Buzhardt's health. On June 13, 1974, after working all night to meet a federal court request for documents, he collapsed with a serious heart attack.

Now he is practicing law in Hilton Head, S.C. Citing his client-attorney relationship, he told us: "I'd like to comment on it, but I can't." Nixon has never returned our calls since he left the White House. This time he couldn't be reached for comment because he was traveling in China.

Sinai Sensors—The United States is

quietly preparing to relocate the sensors which American technicians have planted in the Sinai desert.

These sensitive electronic devices are supposed to monitor any violation of the Israeli-Egyptian truce which Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger arranged.

As part of the accord, the U.S. team was given until Feb. 22 to install the detection system. The monitoring devices have been scattered strategically over 150 square miles of desert. They should pick up any movement inside the truce zone, which the U.S. technicians then would report to both Israel and Egypt.

However, there is one problem. The Israelis maintained control over the truce zone until the Feb. 22 deadline. They possibly may know, therefore, where the hundreds of hidden sensors are located.

The State Department has delicately decided, therefore, that the initial seeding is "tentative." In fairness to the Egyptians, the United States will secretly shift the sensors around. In coming days, almost all of them will be laboriously moved and reconnected to the central monitoring consoles.

The Sinai sensors, according to the March issue of Popular Mechanics, were developed from a Vietnam-era project with the code name "Jason." They can pick up the heat from engines or even bodies.

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