

RADIO-TV MONITORING SERVICE, INC.

3408 WISCONSIN AVENUE, N. W. -- WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016 -- 244-8682

PROGRAM: NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	DATE: JANUARY 30, 1974
STATION OR NETWORK: NBC TELEVISION	TIME: 6:30 PM, EDT

CONTROVERSY OVER DESTRUCTION OF CIA WATERGATE TAPES

TOM BROKAW: Tape recordings are back in the news from Washington, tonight, this time from the Central Intelligence Agency. Apparently the CIA destroyed some tapes on Watergate after Senator Mansfield asked it not to...

* * * * *

BROKAW: The Central Intelligence Agency had tape recordings of telephone conversations about Watergate involving high CIA and White House officials, possibly even some with President Nixon. All but one of those tapes now has been destroyed. CIA Director William Colby said today, the CIA routinely destroys such recordings. The one recording that was kept was a talk between E. Howard Hunt and General Robert Cushman, once the Deputy CIA Director, and as we learn from Carl Stern, the destruction of the CIA tapes may not have been at all that routine.

CARL STERN: There is now the possibility, although the agency denies it, that someone at the Central Intelligence Agency purposely ordered the destruction of Watergate evidence. At issue are conversations that were tape recorded in the month that followed the break-in, between then-CIA Director Richard Helms and his deputy, Vernon Walters, and Pat Gray, John Ehrlichman, John Dean, and possibly even the President. Dean has testified that the White House tried to enlist the CIA in the Watergate cover-up.

It was disclosed yesterday that the tapes no longer exist. The CIA said they were made routinely and destroyed routinely, on January 18, 1973. But on January 16, 1973, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield sent this letter to the various agencies that might have Watergate evidence, asking them to make sure to hold onto it.

- 2 -

When we asked about that, a CIA spokesman said the Mansfield letter didn't arrive until January 22, four days too late. We then checked with Senator Mansfield's office and found this receipt for the letter. It shows the CIA received it on the 17th, the day before the tapes' destruction. It does make quite a difference.

When we again called the CIA, the spokesman acknowledged that the Mansfield letter arrived on the 17th--not the 22nd. The agency has withdrawn its earlier statements and tonight pledged to try diligently to pin down what happened. Carl Stern, NBC News, Washington.

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM The Today Show STATION WRC TV
NBC Network

DATE January 30, 1974 7:00 AM CITY Washington, DC

TAPES DESTROYED

FRANK BLAIR: Senator Howard Baker, the ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate Committee, has confirmed that he has asked the CIA for any tape recordings it made during the period of the Watergate affair. And William Colby, the CIA Director, says he has produced one such tape -- a record of a conversation between Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt and a CIA executive. But Colby says there is no indication that any other pertinent tape recordings were made by the CIA, and he says, in any event, other tapes made during the period have since been routinely destroyed.

Colby says the CIA regularly destroys old tapes in order to create more storage space for new ones.

RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4435 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016, 244-3540

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM	CBS Morning News	STATION	WTOP TV CBS Network
DATE	January 30, 1974 7:00 AM	CITY	Washington, DC

TAPES DESTROYED ROUTINELY

HUGHES RUDD: By definition, the Central Intelligence Agency operates in secret -- secrecy. Well, it now develops the Agency may have secretly been taping some Presidents of the United States.

Dan Rather has that story.

DAN RATHER: CBS News has learned that the Central Intelligence Agency, for many years, operated a secret system of recording practically every conversation between ranking CIA officials and anyone with whom they talked. These secret recordings may have included conversations with Presidents. And at least one Senator who is investigating is known to be centering on the question: Did the Presidents, including President Nixon, know that they were possibly being recorded?

The whole matter came to light when the CIA reluctantly revealed to a Senator that the Agency had destroyed numerous tape recordings considered by some officials to be vital to unraveling the Watergate and related cases. The CIA was asked for secret tape recordings it made of various conversations between Agency officials and central figures in Watergate. The CIA is said to have responded that, unfortunately, only one such tape still exists -- the one of a conversation between Marine General Robert Cushman, then with the CIA, and Howard Hunt, a leader of the White House burglary unit.

High government sources, when asked by CBS News, eventually confirmed that the CIA did have an elaborate secret recording system from the early 1960s through most of the Nixon years. And, that many of the secret recordings have been destroyed. They also confirmed that it is what they called, possible, that the recordings of presidential conversations were included. But the CIA is said to insist there was no deliberate attempt to destroy evidence. The Agency story is the tapes were destroyed, quote, "routinely."

Dan Rather, CBS News, Washington.

RADIO TV REPC TS, INC.

4435 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016, 244-3540

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM	CBS Evening News	STATION	WTOP TV CBS Network
DATE	January 29, 1974 7:00 PM	CITY	Washington, DC

SECRET TAPES

WALTER CRONKITE: Most of the news reports from Washington about tapes have concerned the White House Watergate tapes. But there's a new tape story, this one involving the CIA. And Dan Rather has it.

DAN RATHER: CBS News tonight learned that the Central Intelligence Agency has destroyed numerous tape recordings considered vital to the Watergate investigation, recordings secretly made by the CIA. These may have included recordings secretly made of conversations between the President and ranking CIA officials.

At least one Senator has been trying to get, under what he had hoped was strict security, the actual CIA recordings, anything that might support the CIA's claims that it had only limited connection with such events as the Ellsberg psychiatrist break-in, and the spiriting away of Dita Beard in the ITT case.

The CIA Director, after considerable prodding, agreed to let the one Senator hear the actual tape recording of conversations but then came back to say unfortunately all but one of the tapes had been destroyed. The only one still in existence, the CIA reportedly said, was a tape of a conversation between Marine General Robert Cushman, and Howard Hunt.

Dan Rather, CBS News, Washington.

RADIO TV REPC TS, INC.

4435 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20016, 244-3540

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM	CBS Radio News	STATION	WTOP Radio CBS Network
DATE	January 29, 1974 8:00 PM	CITY	Washington, DC

CIA INVOLVED IN TAPE ERASURES

STUART NOVINS: Disclosure tonight of more tape erasures. Dan Rather reports.

DAN RATHER: CBS News has learned that the Central Intelligence Agency has destroyed numerous tape recordings considered by some investigators to be vital to unravelling the Watergate and related cases -- recordings secretly made by the CIA.

These may have included, investigators believe, recordings secretly made of conversations between ranking CIA officials and the President.

At least one Senator has been trying to get, under what he had hoped was strict security, the actual CIA recordings with the argument that such tapes could prove or disprove the CIA's claims that it had extremely limited connection with such events as the Ellsberg psychiatrist break-in, and the spiriting away of Dita Beard in the ITT case.

The CIA, after considerable prodding, agreed to let the one Senator hear the actual tapes, but then came back to say that unfortunately all but one of the tapes had been destroyed. The only one still in existence, the CIA reportedly said, was a tape of conversation between Marine General Robert Cushman and -- with the CIA, and with Howard Hunt, a member of the White House burglary team.

Dan Rather, CBS News, Washington.