

contact than previously." After these adjustments the Uher 5000 would not buzz any more. The panel's action made it vulnerable to a scathing accusation by Miss Woods' attorney that it had destroyed vital evidence. To Rhyne's question, "So in effect you obliterated the evidence which anyone else would need to test your conclusions, did you not?" Weiss had to reply, "Yes, in large part."

Why then did the panel of experts apparently fail to consider the possibilities raised by Bell and his colleagues at Dektor? The logic of the panel's thought processes emerges fairly clearly from its voluminous testimony before Judge Sirica. The "key and guts" of their report, panel chairman Richard H. Bolt agreed in answer to a question from Ben-Veniste, was the quartet signature left by deenergizing the Uher erase head. The panel repeatedly states that only the control buttons can deenergize the erase heads, so the argument presumably went, "Erase quartet means deenergization means hand operations of the buttons." Panel chairman Bolt stated explicitly, "We asked the question: What operations on the key board would produce that internal function such as, for example, turning power from the erase head. These are the only questions we looked at." All facts were explained to fit this framework and those that didn't, such as the occurrence of the buzz, tended to be ignored. "In our view, the presence or absence of buzz and the exact source of buzz is essentially irrelevant to the issue that we are looking at technically," Bolt told Sirica.

If the panel had decided that the buzz was relevant, it might have been led to consider the effect of the failing rectifier circuit. In fact the panel put considerable effort into determining the source of the buzz and decided, after discovering a correlation between the loudness of the buzz and variations in the noise on the mains power supply, that the latter was the source of the buzz. Weiss even went to the White House with a tape recorder to record the power output of the plug in Miss Woods' office. (No noise variations were detected, the reason being, the panel later decided, that the President and his staff were away at the time and power drains in the White House were different from usual.) "After all of the concentration on the buzz," Rhyne asks concentration on the buzz," Rhyne asks at one point in the hearing, "then you in effect throw it out of the window.

Why?" "We believe that the most solid and basic evidence that we have developed is the direct magnetic evidence on the tape," Bolt answers.

Why did the panel present the court and the public with a summary of its conclusions (which, as it happens, was consciously written in the form of a press release) before it was ready with the technical details on which the conclusions were based? It seems that Sirica asked for a summary to be delivered as soon as possible and the panel was sufficiently confident to give it. Despite the unwelcome nature of their summary to the White House, the panel was so surprised to be treated as hostile witnesses by St. Clair and Rhyne that they asked for a special hearing before Sirica to complain. "We cannot function properly if we are in some minor way set off our stride, or disturbed," panelist Thomas G. Stockham told the judge.

Even if the panel had not considered the Dektor hypothesis at the time of last month's hearings, it will by now have checked it out. It is quite likely that the hypothesis has been disproved, if only because the panel would presumably have publicly admitted by now if its conclusions were ambiguous or even incorrect. Even should the Dektor explanation be true, some important problems remain for those wishing to base a full scenario on it. It is probably necessary to assume that Miss Woods talked for 18½ minutes on the telephone instead of the 5 she estimates. (Argument here would hinge on how common it is to make such an underestimate of time.) Barring a malfunction in the Uher's controls, for which there is no evidence, she must have pressed the record button instead of the stop, as she has related in court, and also have kept her foot on the foot pedal throughout the 18½ minutes. Next is the question of why she cannot remember whom she was talking to. (Rhyne says she receives some 90 calls a day, too many to keep a log of. He adds that he doesn't think there was anything on the tape anyway—Nixon and Haldeman had four meetings the day before, on 19 June, one of them on an airplane, where sensitive aspects of the break-in 2 days earlier were more likely to have been discussed.)

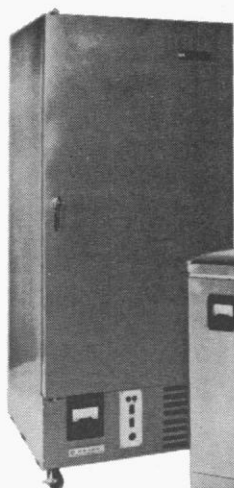
President Nixon has been reported as saying that he doesn't know how the 18½-minute erasure was made, but that he feels sure it was accidental. If the Dektor hypothesis should be proved correct, there is a chance he may be right.—NICHOLAS WADE

APPOINTMENTS

Byron K. Trippet, president, International College Funds of America, to president, University of Americas. . . . **Gerald B. Robins**, professor of higher education, University of Georgia, to president, Texas A&I University. . . . **N. Edd Miller**, president, University of Nevada, to president, University of Maine, Portland-Gorham. . . . **Sammie W. Cosper**, dean, College of Liberal Arts, University of Southwestern Louisiana, to vice president for academic affairs at the university. . . . **Halsey Royden**, professor of mathematics, Stanford University, to dean, School of Humanities and Sciences at the university. . . . **William U. Gardner**, president, International Union Against Cancer, scientific director, Council for Tobacco Research-U.S.A., Inc. . . . **Robert G. Loewy**, dean, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, University of Rochester, to vice president, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. . . . **Robert T. Conley**, dean, College of Science and Engineering, Wright State University, to vice president of the university. . . . **Theodore M. Schad**, executive director, National Water Commission, to executive secretary, Environmental Studies Board, National Research Council. . . . **David Prammer**, director of biological sciences, Rutgers University, to director of university research at the university. . . . **Paul W. McDaniel**, former director, research division, Atomic Energy Commission, to president, Argonne Universities Association. . . . **Andrew M. Sessler**, theoretical physicist, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, to director of the laboratory. . . . **Paul Dreizen**, professor of biophysics and medicine, Downstate Medical Center, State University of New York, Brooklyn, to dean, School of Graduate Studies at the center. . . . **Stanley van den Noort**, acting dean, College of Medicine, University of California, Irvine, to dean of the college. . . . **Francis P. Brether-ton**, professor of earth and planetary sciences, Johns Hopkins University, to president, University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. . . . **George C. Shelton**, associate dean, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Missouri, to dean, College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A&M University. . . . **Lawrence G. Crowley**, associate dean, Medical School, Stanford University, to dean, Medical School, University of

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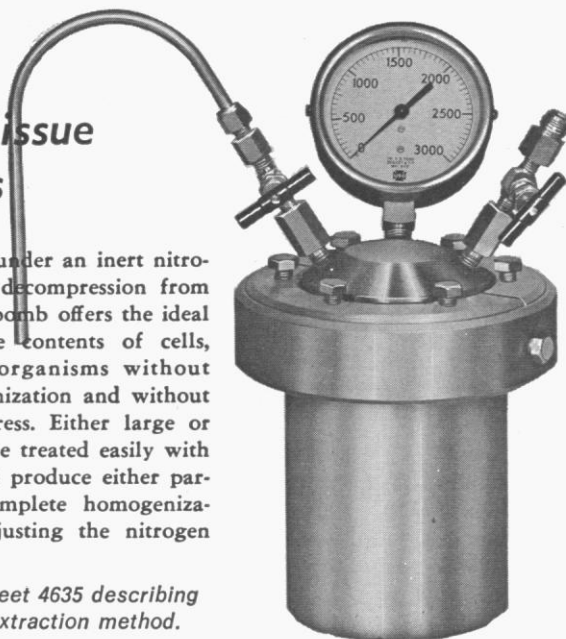
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NEWS AND COMMENT

(Continued from page 734)

Wisconsin, Madison. . . . **Paige Mulholland**, associate dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Kansas State University, to dean, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oklahoma. . . . **Paul R. Paslay**, professor of engineering, Brown University, to dean, School of Engineering, Oakland University. . . . **Vaughnie J. Lindsay**, professor of business education, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, to dean, Graduate School at the university. . . . **Jonathan O. Cole**, former superintendent, Boston State Hospital, to chairman, psychiatry department, Temple University. . . . **Peter J. Jannetta**, former director, neurological surgery division, Surgery Department, School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh, to chairman, neurological surgery department at the school. . . . **Charles E. Blevins**, associate professor of anatomy, Northwestern University Medical School, to chairman, anatomy department, School of Medicine, Indiana University. . . . **James M. Watson**, assistant professor of sociology, University of Rochester, to chairman, sociology department, State University of New York Teachers College, Geneseo. . . . **Quentin Peterson**, chairman, chemistry department, Monmouth College, to chairman, chemistry department, Central Michigan University. . . . **Wadi A. Bardawil**, professor of pathology, School of Medicine, Tufts University, to chairman, pathology department, Creighton University. . . . **Ralph L. Llewellyn**, executive secretary, board on energy studies, National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council, to chairman, physics department, Indiana State University. . . . **Richard D. Berlin**, associate professor of physiology, School of Medicine, Harvard University, to chairman, physiology departments, Medical and Dental Schools, University of Connecticut. . . . **Richard J. Popp**, assistant professor of psychology, State University of New York, Buffalo, to chairman, psychology department, University of Dayton. . . . **Joseph A. Brink**, director of development, Monsanto Enviro-Chem Systems Inc., to chairman, chemical engineering department, Washington State University. . . . **Tomlinson Fort, Jr.**, professor of chemical engineering, Case Western Reserve University, to chairman, chemical engineering department, Carnegie-Mellon University. . . . **J. Joseph Doerr**, acting Dean, School of Education, University of Missouri, Kansas City, to dean of the school.