

WATERGATE, vols. 1 thru 5. Folkways Records, 1973-75. Five discs, each approx. 50 minutes, with notes. \$6.98 each.

Watergate: The Break-In, James McCord Testifies and President Nixon's Watergate Speech of April 30, 1973. #FD5551.

Watergate: The Testimony of Jeb Stuart Magruder, A Question of Ethics, vol. 2. #FD5552.

Watergate: "I Hope The President is Forgiven," John W. Dean III Testifies, vol. 3. #FD5553.

Watergate: "White House Horrors," The Testimony of John Mitchell, vol. 4. #FD5554.

Watergate: The Testimony of John Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman, vol. 5. #FD5555.

There is no doubt. This is an interesting series of recordings about a tremendously important, historic, and shameful period in American political history. This five-volume set, however, is interesting not entirely because of its subject matter but also because of what it attempts to do in a little over four hours of listening time.

The Phase I hearings of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities lasted from May 17 to August 7, 1973. Thirty-four witnesses gave over two hundred hours of testimony which when transcribed fill 3,064 pages of a nine-volume report. Folkways has attempted to reduce, excerpt, and edit this mass of recorded history into its essential ingredients. Compiler Don Molner has done a creditable job. He has selected the key witnesses, broken down their testimony, and arranged excerpts for a continuity of presentation on what he considers to be the most significant revelations and topics of the hearings. This is a valuable service, performed for both teachers and students, but the value should be recognized for what it is.

For example, on the positive side, hearing the voices of witnesses and the Watergate committee itself, greatly enhances the sense and feel--the atmosphere--of what occurred. The way in which questions were asked and answered, the tone, inflection, the irony and sarcasm, the natural sounds within the chamber, the reaction of the spectators--all this makes one realize that the printed transcripts of the Watergate hearings are not only dull by comparison, but that the transcripts themselves contain numerous and frequent errors in word and context that differ markedly from what was actually said.

On the negative side, however, Folkways often misleads the listener by its surgical editing techniques and adds confusion where there should be crystal clarity and comprehension. For example, a sense of disorientation is caused by a failure to indicate either in the enclosed notes or on the recordings the dates from which testimony is excerpted. Many of the witnesses appeared over a period of many days. Nowhere are the exact dates of testimony given except on the John Dean disc where a date of June 25 is mentioned. Even in this case, the actual recorded material is taken from the sessions of June 26 and 27, not June 25 where Dean presented a lengthy

and extremely important opening statement. It would have been helpful if short pauses had been used consistently throughout the series to earmark the presence of an edit within a given segment to notify the listener that testimony had been left out. The dates then could have been indicated to show the compression of actual time to that on the recordings. In addition, in several instances, such as during James McCord's testimony, the actual chronology of what took place is perverted by placing a Sam Ervin interrogation of the witness from the morning of May 18 after the Senator Talmadge interrogation which occurred on the afternoon of May 18.

The point is this: obviously a great deal of time and effort was taken to extract some of the important interrogations and revelations on critical issues. It would have increased the educational value of the recordings if the same time and effort had been taken to provide adequate documentation or brief narrative remarks to guide the listener along and to eliminate any possible confusion.

Bearing this in mind, and realizing that only very large libraries and institutions will be able to purchase entire gavel to gavel Watergate hearings (available from Pacifica Tape Library, 5316 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90019 for \$980), the Folkways series is recommended for library and media center collections if they are supplemented with use of the printed Watergate transcripts.

WHO KILLED JFK? Center for Cassette Studies, 1973. One cassette. 59 minutes. #35430. \$16.95.

For many people the Warren Commission report stands as the official record of the events surrounding President John F. Kennedy's death. For others, the Warren report is a collection of misinformation that leaves crucial questions unanswered. Recently in the media and especially on television, the validity of the conclusions of the Warren report have again been challenged, and the circumstances surrounding this tragic moment in our history are undergoing further examination.

In August 1972, Dr. Cyril Wecht, research professor of law, civilian forensic pathologist and Director of the Institute of Forensic Sciences at Duquesne University, studied the autopsy reports of John F. Kennedy entered in evidence with the Warren Commission and kept on file at the National Archives. The results of his study are given in this recorded address presented at the Masonic Lodge, Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania, in November 1973.

Les Waffan