

F Post
5-19-69

Powell Hits Leak On Fortas

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, D-N.Y., charged Friday the Nixon administration leaked the information that led to the resignation of Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas to get back at liberals on the court.

Powell said Nixon and Attorney General John Mitchell were angry over the court's decision to investigate a fraud case involving the El Paso Natural Gas Company, a client of the Nixon-Mitchell law firm.

"Six days after Mitchell was the attorney general he served notice on the Supreme Court that the Department of Justice was no longer interested in the El Paso Gas Co.—a problem for the Supreme Court because Nixon (the law firm) got \$714,000 from the company," Powell said.

He said the court then said it would investigate the case.

"The week after, the Department of Justice then fed Life Magazine the story that had been in their files for five months," Powell said.

Fortas became the first justice in history to quit the court under fire Thursday, 11 days after the magazine published a report that in 1966 he had accepted—and later returned—a \$20,000 payment from a foundation sponsored by the family of jailed financier Louis E. Wolfson.

The Harlem Democrat spoke to about 400 students at Penn State University as a part of a week-long black arts festival.