

Time 8/30/73

THE ADMINISTRATION

Safire Afire

As it apparently must to all men who consider themselves high in the confidence of Richard M. Nixon, the revelation came last week to William Safire, longtime Nixon speechwriter and now a columnist for the New York Times, that his phone had been tapped.* It filled him with what he called "restrained fury."

"I did not knock myself loose for Mr. Nixon in 1959 and 1960," he wrote, "and cast my lot with him through the long, arid comeback years of 1965 through 1968 to have him—or some lizard-lidded paranoid acting in his name without his approval—eavesdropping on my conversations."

A matter of national security? "My eye," wrote Safire. "During the 37 days in July and August of 1969 that some agent in earphones was illegally (as the Supreme Court later found) listening to my every word, I was writing the (sh!) President's message on welfare reform."

Safire thinks he may have been tapped because, by White House standards, he was too friendly with the press. He talked freely, if contentiously, with ideological opponents and invited them to his home. Now, with the power of the press behind him, he plans to track down the "lizard-lidded paranoid" who

ordered him bugged. Any idea who it might be? "If I wanted to say who it was, I'd say who it was," Safire retorted. "I want to be absolutely sure. I'm on the trail of it." When he finds the culprit, he may write another column with unrestrained fury.

*Safire was one of 17 persons—four newsmen and 13 Government officials—who were subjected to wiretaps between 1969 and 1971 after classified information was leaked to the press. Among those tapped—not all the names are known even today—were several members of Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff.



"Testing, testing, 1,2,3,4..."