

# Former Watergate Lawyer Sues Nixon, Campaign Aides

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The former lawyer for four of the Watergate conspirators, claiming intense pressures on his clients to get them to fire him as their attorney, yesterday sued President Nixon and others for \$10 million in damages and \$113,500 in legal fees he says are still owed him.

In the suit, New York attorney Henry B. Rothblatt alleges that the pressures were applied and he was fired after he refused to go along with a scheme to permit his clients to plead guilty at their trial last January.

The purpose of the pressures, Rothblatt alleges in the suit, "was to obstruct justice by assuring that no testimony concerning the Watergate break-in would be offered at the trial" and thereby ensure that no White House or Nixon campaign officials would be implicated.

The suit, which raises no specific new charges against President Nixon or his subordinates, alleges that Mr. Nixon must assume financial responsibility for activities undertaken in his name by

White House or Nixon campaign officials.

Rothblatt alleges that, in addition to the \$113,500 in legal fees, he is entitled to \$10 million damages for "malicious interference with an attorney-client contract."

This alleged interference caused "damage to his reputation" as a lawyer, Rothblatt says. The suit states that Rothblatt's clients in the case believed the Watergate break-in was in the interest of national security and was not a criminal act and, therefore, he had entered innocent pleas for them.

Rothblatt represented Eugenio Martinez, Virgilio Gonzalez, Bernard Barker and Frank Sturgis through the first week of the Watergate trial in January.

The Washington Post reported at the time that Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr., who had already pleaded guilty, was working behind the scenes after the trial began to get the four men to plead guilty.

When Rothblatt refused to enter guilty pleas for his clients, they notified chief

prosecutor Earl J. Silbert of their desires.

U. S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica then appointed Alvin Newmeyer Sr. to represent the four men for purposes of changing their pleas to guilty. Sirica accepted the pleas after the four men denied they had been promised anything by Hunt or anyone else in return for their pleas.

Rothblatt's suit, filed by attorney Robert M. Price in Superior Court here yesterday, also lists as defendants:

The Finance Committee to Re-elect the President (FCRP); The Committee for the Re-election of the President (CRP); Maurice Stans, the finance committee chairman; John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general and former re-election committee chairman; former White House aides H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, and John Caulfield; Herbert W. Kalmbach, the President's personal attorney; Jeb Stuart Magruder, former White House aide and deputy campaign chief, and Watergate conspirators G. Gordon Liddy and Hunt.