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# 2 Ex-U.S. Aides Back Life's Report of Tampering With Justice in San Diego

SAN DIEGO, March 21 (AP) —Two former Federal investigators described today as accurate portions of a Life magazine article charging that the Nixon Administration had "seriously tampered with justice in San Diego."

Richard Huffman, a former special assistant to United States Attorney Harry Steward, said Mr. Steward had prevented him from pursuing an investigation into alleged illegal use of Nixon campaign funds in 1968. Mr. Huffman, now chief deputy district attorney of San Diego County, said Mr. Steward caused a subpoena issued for a key witness to be withdrawn.

David Stutz, a former Internal Revenue Service agent in San Diego, said "Washington" refused to allow him to testify in the bribery trial last

Year of the San Diego Mayor and other local officials.

Mr. Huffman said the Life article "seems to be essentially correct as to those things with which I'm acquainted." He was a Deputy State Attorney General appointed as special assistant to Mr. Steward and to the United States attorney in Los Angeles.

**Inquiry Reported Squelched**

Life said Mr. Steward had squelched an investigation that political contributions for the Nixon-Agnew campaign had been shuffled illegally through an advertising company controlled by C. Arnholt Smith, Huffman, now chief deputy district attorney of San Diego County, said Mr. Steward caused a subpoena issued for a key witness to be withdrawn.

The magazine also contended that the Administration delayed a grand jury investigation of tax fraud charges against John Alessio, a San Diego business-

man and associate of Mr. Smith, until the statute of limitations had almost run out.

Mr. Steward issued a statement yesterday denying the Life charges but refused to answer reporters' questions. He declined to comment on Mr. Huffman's assertions except to say that a statement would be issued by the Justice Department.

Mr. Huffman told the San Diego Evening Tribune that he had consented to be interviewed because the Life article was on the street.

The newspaper gave this account of the interview:

"Huffman said he gave a statement to the F.B.I. which related to what he called Steward's interference with a Federal grand jury investigation of Alessio, who later was convicted."

A subpoena was issued for another Smith associate, Frank

Thornton, a San Diego advertising man, then vice president of Barnes-Champ Advertising Company, on the basis of the investigation being presented to the grand jury, Mr. Huffman said.

"I and another attorney, Mike DeFeo, caused the subpoena to be issued for Frank Thornton," Mr. Huffman said. "We sent Dave Stutz to serve the subpoena on Thornton. He was unable to find Thornton, who was out of town. We had not discussed the issuance of the subpoena with Steward."

**Refused Subpoena**

"Afterward, we—Stutz, DeFeo and myself—talked to Steward about being unable to serve the subpoena. Steward said not to serve the subpoena and he would talk to Thornton about the funds himself. "It was suggested it would

not be a good idea for Steward to become involved because he had said he and Thornton were such good friends. Steward did talk with Thornton, he said, and said Thornton had told him the money was for a wage-and-hour study which Barnes-Champ had not yet done and that the money had not been funneled illegally into a political fund.

"I told Steward I didn't believe what was being related to me as Thornton's answers and poenaed like any other citizen."

Mr. Huffman said the United States Attorney, a Nixon appointee, refused to allow this. He said, "Mr. Steward told me Thornton was a very good friend of his and was the man probably responsible for him getting his job as United States Attorney."

Mr. Stutz, 33, an I.R.S. agent from 1963 to 1971, called the news conference and said, "Those facts set forth in the article relating to my personal involvement are true."

Mr. Stutz said "Washington" refused to allow him to testify in 1971 in the so-called yellow cab trial, in which then Mayor Frank Curran and other San Diego city officials were charged with accepting bribes for their votes in raising taxi-cab rates.

After his acquittal, Mr. Curran said he received a congratulatory telephone call from President Nixon.

Life said Mr. Curran won office with the backing of Mr. Smith, who was part owner of the cab company until shortly before the fare increase.

Mr. Huffman said Mr. DeFeo now is head of the Justice Department's strike force on organized crime in Kansas City.