

San Diego Scandal Charges

Two Support Life's Story

San Diego

Two former federal investigators described as accurate yesterday portions of a Life magazine article charging that the Nixon administration "seriously tampered with justice in San Diego."

Richard Huffman, a former special assistant to U.S. Attorney Harry Steward, said Steward prevented him from pursuing an investigation into alleged illegal use of Nixon campaign funds in 1968.

Huffman, now chief deputy district attorney of San Diego County, said Steward caused a subpoena issued or a key witness to be withdrawn.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.

CORRECT

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 Steward and to the United States Attorney in Los Angeles.

Life said Steward quelled an investigation that political contributions or the Nixon - Agnew campaign had been shuffled ille-



AP Wirephotos
RICHARD HUFFMAN
He probed funds



DAVID STUTZ
He couldn't testify

gally through an advertising company controlled by Arnold Smith, identified as a longtime friend and financial ally of President Nixon.

The magazine also contended that the administration delayed a grand jury investigation of tax fraud charges against John Alessio, a San Diego businessman and associate of Smith, until the statute of limitations had almost run out. Alessio was later convicted.

Steward issued a statement Monday denying the Life charges but refused to answer reporters' questions.

STATEMENT

He declined to comment on Huffman's claims except

to say that a statement would be issued by the Justice Department. By late yesterday the Justice Department had not done so.

Huffman told the San Diego Evening Tribune he 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 FBI which related to what he called Steward's interference with a federal grand jury investigation of Alessio.

A subpoena was issued for another Smith associate, San Diego advertising man Frank Thornton, then vice president of Barnes - Champ

Advertising Co., on the basis of the investigation being presented to the grand jury, Huffman said.

"I and another attorney, Mike DeFeo, caused the subpoena to be issued for Frank Thornton," 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."

FUNDS

"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 I said Thornton should be subpoenaed like any other citizen."

Huffman said the U.S. Attorney, a Nixon appointee, refused to allow this.

Huffman 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."

Associated Press