

Wiretaps On Hoffman Ruled Illegal

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A judge has ruled the government acted illegally in wiretapping four telephone conversations involving activist Abbie Hoffman.

The Justice Department said the wiretaps were authorized for "national security" reasons by Attorney General John N. Mitchell at the request of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. They were used to obtain an indictment against Hoffman on charges of assaulting a police officer and inciting a riot during the Mayday antiwar demonstrations here last spring.

U.S. District Court Judge John Lewis Smith Jr. said Wednesday the wiretaps violated Hoffman's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures.

The result of the finding is that Hoffman must be allowed to see transcripts of the conversations two days before his trial. The Supreme Court still is to decide whether similar wiretaps can be made without a court order.

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