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S.E.
Cheen

Tape That Made Sirica Blush

Washington

Some harsh words were heard on a White House tape played yesterday at the Watergate coverup trial about U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, the man presiding at the trial.

Everyone in the courtroom was listening through earphones to the tape of a conversation on March 21, 1973, between then President Nixon and John W. Dean III.

Dean and Mr. Nixon were talking about the fact that bond for the Watergate burglars had been set at \$100,000.

"The same judge - Sirica - let one guy who, who's (laughs) charged with shooting a United States senator out on the street," said Dean.

Mr. Nixon: Sirica did?

Dean: Yeah" It's just, it's phenomenal.

Mr. Nixon: I thought he was hardliner judge.

Dean: He's a he is just a, a peculiar animal.

Throughout that portion of the tape, Sirica appeared to be stifling a laugh. Finally, he could hold it no longer.

He laughed and then blushed.

Moments later on the tape, Dean and Mr. Nixon discussed the possibility that Sirica would give the burglars stiff sentences."

"He can be a, just a son of a bitch," said Dean.

Sirica nodded affirmatively.

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