

Courtly conversations [on transcripts, Nixon tapes]

by Tom Wicker

[On Nixon's "expressed willingness to use Government power for his personal political ends."]

"This central problem also is apparent in the solicitude the other principal actors who speak in these remarkable transcripts - from H.R. Haldeman to Henry Petersen - showed at all times for the protection of what they persistently referred to as 'the Presidency' - never Richard Nixon's scalp. They were like courtiers surrounding a king who could very nearly say with Louis, 'I am the state.'"