

Mitchell And the Court

New York

Television commentator Eric Sevareid said yesterday that former Attorney General John Mitchell approached two Supreme Court justices in 1969 to try to influence a ruling from the high bench in a set of wire-tapping cases.

The effort was unsuccessful, Sevareid said on his nightly commentary on the CBS evening news.

"It is now known, though never heretofore published, that in the spring of '69 Attorney General Mitchell sent a Justice Department emissary privately to the Supreme Court," Sevareid said.

"There he tried to influence two justices on a pending series of cases involving wire-taping. The justices ignored this extraordinary violation of the separation of powers principle and they ruled against the department."

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