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Watergate, Alioto Case Link Denied

Washington State Attorney General Slade Gorton in Seattle yesterday denied any link between the Watergate Scandal and Mayor Alioto's fee splitting trial.

Gorton, a Republican, filed the losing civil anti-trust suit against Alioto and later held discussions with White House officials about the case.

Alioto has said Watergate will help convince voters that a magazine story linking him to the Mafia and two fee splitting court suits were attempts at "political persecution" by the Nixon administration.

"If there are any parallels with Watergate in this," Gorton said yesterday, "it is in Mr. Alioto's conduct . . . What is involved is Mr. Alioto's admitted secret removal of a fee ceiling and his admitted sharing of over \$750,000 of that fee with the then attorney general (John J. O'Connell) and his assistants."

Gorton admitted former White House aide John Ehrlichman was contacted in connection with the civil suit, but he said: "The contact was an attempt to keep the federal government out of the matter."

Gorton added that correspondence between the state of Washington and Ehrlichman came out in Alioto's civil fee splitting trial and the judge ruled that it was irrelevant.