

Man Who Told of Tapes

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Yet Another Firing?

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Washington

The super-loyal Nixon aide who spilled the beans on the Watergate tapes is super-cool about the crisis he triggered.

Alexander P. Butterfield won't admit he was shaken by the recent explosion of top-level firings and resignations which has brought President Nixon to the brink of impeachment.

Despite rumors he'll be forced out as administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, a job he has held since March, Butterfield insists he has suffered no retaliation for revealing the most embarrassing information yet to come from an official still in high office.

"There's only one kind of truth," Butterfield said in an interview, in which he made it clear he preferred to talk about aviation.

"I don't care if you're under oath or not. Oath-shmoath. If a high-level investigative body asks you direct questions, you answer."

The recorded presidential conversations, whose existence he made known in July to the Senate Watergate Committee, are now crucial to Nixon's future and pivotal in pending court actions.

The quality of the tapes is "pretty good," Butterfield says, based on periodic checks he made while in the White House.

Ironically, it was Butterfield, a handsome, 47-year-old former Air Force colonel, who coined the now-famous phrase, "loyalty is the name of the game."

That was in his White House memo on the firing of Pentagon expert Ernest Fitzgerald, who had uncov-



A. P. BUTTERFIELD
Straight as an arrow

ered a \$2 billion-cost overrun on the C-5A airplane.

It may be true that Butterfield hasn't felt Nixon's wrath, but he is facing Fitzgerald's, who plans to sue for more than a million dollars in damages. Butterfield and former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, now a

Nixon counselor, will be among the defendants.

Although Fitzgerald has won job re-instatement rights, Butterfield says he "should not be allowed back on the federal payroll. He's done something unpardonable. It is my understanding he didn't go through channels."

Butterfield, a former command pilot and parachutist, has worked hard to bone up on his new job. He finds it "much more challenging" than the White House post he held for four years.

The tape ruckus hasn't affected him at FAA, he says but an aide called Butterfield's Senate appearance "a turning point. Until then the aviation community was saying, 'Who the hell is Butterfield?' Now they've seen him come through on TV as a leader and basically honest man."

Butterfield appears easy-going, but is said to be tireless. He works a 14-hour day with only one hobby — flying.

Butterfield's wife, an old college chum of Mrs. H. R. Haldeman, describes "the whole Watergate episode as a strain, because of very good friends."

It was Haldeman who brought Butterfield into the

Nixon White House, where the Watergate scandal was later to cost Haldeman his job as presidential chief of staff.

Earlier, Butterfield worked for Democrat Joseph Califano Jr., a top Pentagon and White House official under President Lyndon Johnson. Califano describes Butterfield as "straight as an arrow."

Now, as chief of the nation's civil aviation network, Butterfield rides herd on a \$2 billion budget and ticks off a long list of priorities.

They start with air safety and run through noise, hijacking, modernization of flight service stations, and transportation of pets.

All told, he says he has been too busy to give the tape crisis "more than two minutes' thought," but he predicts sadly that it will take "a long time" to blow over.