



AP Wirephoto

Newsman surrounded White House lawyer J. D. St. Clair and Fred J. Buzhardt after the gag rule was issued

## Sirica's Gag Rule

# Ban on Tape Comments

Washington

A federal judge moved yesterday to halt further public speculation about the findings of technical experts examining the subpoenaed Watergate tapes.

U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica imposed the gag rule after meeting with at-

torneys from the White House, the special prosecutor's office and counsel for Rose Mary Woods, President Nixon's personal secretary.

A month ago Sirica had referred questions about the gap in one tape and the claim that two other conversations were never recorded to special prosecutor Leon

Jaworski with a recommendation he turn it over to a grand jury.

After yesterday's meeting Sirica issued a statement saying, "All participants in the meeting have agreed that continued public comment on the grand jury's work by those who have any association with the investigation is inappropriate."

It was the second time within a week that a federal judge has warned lawyers involved in the Watergate cases against continued public statements.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell urged on Friday that the White House and special prosecutor's office stop issuing statements about the credibility of ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III.

Sirica also summoned the grand jury looking into the tapes case to his courtroom

to caution its members against discussing the case.

Sirica moved after a flurry of reports over the weekend about possible preliminary findings of the six-member panel of experts examining the tapes.

A published report said that one panel member had told the White House and the prosecutor's office early in January that he suspected that two of the subpoenaed tapes given to the court were not originals.

James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's chief Watergate lawyer, said Sunday that such a preliminary report had been made. But he added that a technical investigation by the White House had disclosed that the findings "are actually characteristic of the Sony recorder and do not indicate a rerecording was made."

Associated Press