

# 'I'm Sorry Henry Lost His Cool'

As I first heard the story from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger—oh, way back—a couple of years ago, it went like this:

He was sitting in his office in the White House and he got a call to report at once to the President.

There—with Mr. Nixon in the Oval Office—were J. Edgar Hoover and then-Attorney General John Mitchell. The President was pounding the desk with the flat of his hand. These leaks to newspapers—they must stop. You, he tells Kissinger, you give the names of the people of your staff who had access to this information; you give them to Mr. Hoover here and we'll find out who's doing the talking.

Reporters? Reporters were added by Hoover. "Plumbers"? He never heard of "plumbers" until he saw the word in the newspapers. Thank heaven.

Now that's the way I first heard the story—and here an acknowledgement is in order.

Journalists—like other people—have friends, and Henry Kissinger is an old friend. I believed his story and, despite contrary testimony, I still do.

What, after all, is the contrary testimony?

First, memoranda from the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Should we believe Hoover? Search the files of the

FBI and you will find that all officialdom throughout Hoover's lifetime ordered wiretaps, but—according to J. Edgar Hoover—J. Edgar Hoover never did.

Second, a comment on the tapes from the President of the United States seeming to say that Kissinger ordered wiretaps. Do you believe the President of the United States? Does anybody?

Oh, I'm sure Henry Kissinger put his case in the best possible light when he was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said he didn't "initiate" the taps. Well, that word is subject to interpretation. Sometimes a man makes a request he knows his boss wants him to make. Does he "initiate" the request? May it not be said in a larger sense that his boss did?

But I'm sorry Henry lost his cool. I thought he looked like a gauleiter standing there before the cameras at Salzburg. Remember that story about the German airline pilot? He welcomes the passengers aboard, tells them to sit back and relax. "We'll have a comfortable flight," he says and then, pronouncing his words slowly and positively, he adds, "as long as you do exactly what I say."

As a reporter, I have to say that gauleiter was Henry Kissinger at his press

conference. But as a friend, I make excuses for a friend.

Henry Kissinger is tired. Wouldn't anybody be tired after all that shuttle diplomacy? All those details to remember? All those people to win to his point of view? All those miles to travel and not enough sleep?

And Henry Kissinger was looking for praise. Wouldn't anybody look for praise if, after settling a war between bitter enemies, he'd arranged for his boss to make a tour in triumph of countries which would have spurned him a month ago?

It must hurt to expect praise—and to be called a liar instead.

Another excuse comes to mind. Henry Kissinger just got married. There's nothing like a new wife to make a man look to his honor and to find quarrel in a straw.

But withal, it must be said that it was not Henry Kissinger's finest moment—that blowup in Salzburg. And it won't do him a bit of good. The facts will come out.

When they do, I hope he can greet them with that candor and lightness and gaiety which is his customary style. The world will then excuse him. As we say of the heavyweight champion with a hangover, "He had one coming."