



Wide World Photos

Morton Halperin holds a copy of the Nixon deposition.

ACLU deposes Nixon

In January ACLU staff counsel John Shattuck questioned Richard M. Nixon for seven and a half hours about his knowledge of the wiretapping of Morton H. Halperin's home telephone from 1969 to 1971. Halperin's lawsuit against Nixon, Kissinger and others is expected to go to trial in the next few months.

The Nixon deposition was made public on March 10. In the excerpt that follows, Nixon denies ordering the wiretap on Halperin and worries that his deposition might be leaked to the press.

Q. So that the record is clear, did you on that date or any other date prior to that instruct Director Hoover or Attorney General Mitchell to install a wiretap on Dr. Halperin?

A. Did I? No, I have no recollection of so doing. I think the record should show that because the contrary was in the public press and this deposition will also be in the public press, probably in the P.M. papers.

MR. SHATTUCK: Your attorney has the opportunity to say the magic words on that.

THE WITNESS: No. I have every confidence in the attorneys for the ACLU to follow a single standard with regard to the rights of those they represent, where it is with regard to their right to counsel. You are only interested in the truth. You have a set standard.

Therefore, I leave myself totally in your hands in that respect and of course, would be very surprised if the ACLU would, despite the great pressures you have from the press, deliberately leak any information prior to the time that Judge Smith has approved it.

MR. SHATTUCK: We will certainly treat every party and witness in this case with absolute equality, Mr. Nixon.

The day after the deposition was taken, newspapers carried stories about what Nixon had said. The source: "associates of the former president."

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