

3/14/74

How He Did It

As long as there is a society in which man enjoy at least the trappings of freedom scholars will ponder how Nixon got away with as much as he did as long as he did.

No one work - not even a series - can begin to encompass this.

But it can be illustrated, and understood from example.

Nixon's Presidency set many records, none good. He and it are history's most crooked and most false-speaking ever. In practising personal dishonesties in which small sums were not below him and fraud was common in intent and deed and in which lies were frequent and presented as the ultimate truths by the most probative and abused of men, what Nixon was really doing is living Orwell and doing Hitler.

He told no little lies. They were all whoppers, so breathtaking he was never called a liar. Not even when he announced it on live coast-to-coast TV in the example we shall use. In living and living by these lies Nixon was rewriting history as he made it and everything in government was opposite what he said it was.

Particularly in his extremity- for this coincided with the beginning of actual consideration of impeachment by the House Judiciary Committee - did Nixon grow daring. It was the Emperor's Clothes deal. And in all the media there was no single little boy to cry "Naked!"

Nothing was too raw and almost nothing was exposed to the cleaning sun of truth.

So deficient was the reporting that even the methodological changes required by survival went unexplained to the people. The most necessary and the most obvious was not hiding himself in the White House as he had done for almost two years. Warly in 1974 he began showing himself, in person and in pretense of governing.

To begin with he dared not show his face outside the deep south and even there he was jeered.

More than the beginning of consideration of impeachment -with which he also toyed successfully - and in his customary practice of Chotinerism - he had to contend with the coming second-round of indictments of those who had been closest to him and highest in his administration. The first of these were returned the first of March.

His counteroffensive was in pretending to be an active President serving the country's need and above all this dirtiness in which he was personally and constantly immersed.

His first effort of the year, based on giving his own version of such scandals as those involving ITT, presented as a white paper, kicked back so badly he retreated until, inappropriately the commemoration of Lincoln's birthday. He then desecrated that memorial of cool and calm beauty by presenting himself there and as the reincarnation of Lincoln, as the only President who has ever sustained even a fraction of the abuse heaped on the long-suffering innocent Nixon. This was on February 12.

Two days later he was in Miami at the dedication of a private health clinic, the occasion for heavy-handed non-joking. Four days later he was with George Wallace at Huntsville, Alabama, for Honor America Day, the ironies unnoted in the media.

February 23 he announced his program to guarantee American's the privacy that had been taken from ~~him~~ them. Here he was, the man who had actually ordered preparation of and then ordered into existence an Ameriform Gestapo and with his bare face hanging out pretending that everyone else was the denier of precious and Constitutional privacy. Only even his plan did not do what he claimed for it. All of his troubles came from violating the privacy and all the other rights of his opponents and there he was beaming at the world as the one man who wanted to assure this right to all.

All the while he knew the new indictments were coming. He had to face them. Handing them down had been delayed, as everyone knew. Inevitably the two men closest to him, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, had to be among those indicted. The delay was to avoid transgressing on the rights of his two former cabinet officers already indicted for personal and political corruption, Mitchell and Stans. Until the jury in their New York City trial was selected and sequestered it was possible for them to claim that publicity attendant upon the new indictments compromised their rights.

So, while that jury-selection process was going on, Nixon held his first press conference in about a quarter of a year, on February 25. Three days later he addressed a Young republican convention in Washington.

(Here he harked back to the "Americans are not quitters" theme of his Honor America

speech speech. While urging the young not to become disillusioned, this man who had done more than any other to require disillusionment told the young, "keep your faith, keep your confidence." And as he has presented himself as a little more than Lincoln, here he was tougher than the toughest while hurling a new challenge and his "enemies," making on it was a true American philosophy and the only way to deal with the evil ones, "Always go on and fight for those things you believe in... You learn from your defeats and then go on to fight again." The injured innocent called upon those who supported him - and these did with cries of "Three More years!" - not to withdraw from politics because that would leave it "to those who don't care about their mistakes so much." This incredible pretense that someone other than he, his and his audience's enemies, had made these little "mistakes," didn't even make the first page of The Washington Post. "It made page 12. It typifies the Nixon approach of injured innocence in a world of evil and of the media's going along with it in the guise of objectivity.)

After the first new indictments and the day before those entirely inadequate ones dealing with his "Plumbers'" unit of personal stormtroopers on March 6, he held another press conference in which he again rewrote history. It is from this that we take our example.

On the eighth he announced his "campaign reforms," to cleanse politics for all the worlds as though he were not the personal contaminant. It was a program that had not the slightest legislative prospect, as he knew, he he went out to his hardcore as another proof of Nixonian purity. What it actually was is a condemnation of each and every one of the practices of his entire lifetime, but no major element of the media explained this to the people. There was no single vice he did not claim to want to end that he himself had not practised as it had never been practised before. Not reporting this was obedience to the new and false god of "objectivity."

Even the naming of a new head for the bicentennial commission- and only a military man was fit so he appointed his Secretary of the Navy, John W. Warner - was the occasion for new Nixon counterattack and new pretending of being the injured one and the only innocent.

Safe and secure in the taxpayer-subsidized and supported private retreat near his bosom pal Bebe Rebozo in Key Biscayne, Nixon proclaimed, "We can build a future in which a hundred years from now, another anniversary can look back with pride on a time..." that, despite any face he put on it, was and is the time of The Watergate. But there were no editorials saying this was not a time of or for "pride," not "when our generation" laid "a sound foundation for even greater progress in the future."

Ahead lay new appearances, at The Grand Old Opry in Nashville and others in Chicago- his first venture above the Mason-Dixon line- and in Houston as he sought to rebuilt his image and defended himself by attacking those who exposed him.

If one might have expected the few editorial eyebrows to be raised over the claim that ruining the economy, creating shortages in the midst of plenty, fueling inflation as it never had been fueled before and in the midst of the first energy crisis and destroying confidence and any reason for confidence was either cause for "pride" or "progress" or the basis for "even greater progress in the future," no such editorials or by-lined stories appeared.

He got away with it except for those who had the acumen to see him not as the sheep but as the wolf.

Inside the White House this new counterattack was dubbed "Operation Friendly Persuasion." Orwell or Hitler could not have titled it better.

Most people are normal and honest. They are list with and uncomprehending of mental illness, and because they don't go around rbbing their friends and neih neighbors are not atuned to consummate dishonesty. We tend to believe what we are told, more when the media delivers it to us without at the same time telling us what it <sup>reports</sup> ~~says~~ is false.

If Nixon's credibility has sunk lower than any Pres president had ever suffered, recognizing this concatenation of unparalleled false representations as the monster lies they were became the obligation of each harried citizen for the media did not so inform the people.

Where it came closest, with our example, it fell far short of the public need and that of editorial journalistic honesty and integrity and then, where it was done, was done in the least-read part of the paper, in editorials.

And even there it was done entirely inadequately, so entirely inadequately it became, as had the first of this new round of indictments, a part of covering Nixon.

There was the question of Nixon's knowledge of if not participation in all these crimes. If he knew of them and did nothing, as we have seen, this in itself is an entire new series of crimes.

There can be no reasonable doubt that he knew from the outset, regardless of his and the media's pretenses.

But John Dean, in defending himself, had to tell enough of the truth and to lay bare enough of the record.

~~That Nixon addressed what he did the way he did in his days before~~

Dean's statement is that Nixon knew of White House hush-money for the original defendants on August 21, 1972. He was called a liar by Nixon and everyone speaking for him on this and on Dean.

In the midst of all this rewriting of history, Nixon's Senate leader, Hugh Scott, himself in trouble over alleged financial corruption in which he and his former assistants made Administrators of the General Services Administration by Nixon, took a new lead and a fresh start in calling Dean a liar and on precisely this question.

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"New" because Scott had made a virtual career of it once he got himself quoted, as he did in The New York Times of June 20, 1972 in what then appeared to be a perfectly safe condemnation of the break-in at Democrat headquarters.

"Unconscionable and inexcusable," this man of political principle and upright practise called it.

~~But by the time the exodus from the White House began~~

Then, when it became apparent that Watergate could be an election issue, he was in full defense of White House innocence, that being the Republican and his own need.

Once the election was over, he was letting it be known there were some things of which he did not approve.

But once John Dean started talking, he became the point man in Nixon's anti-Dean squad outside the White House. He had and never lost a thing for Dean, whose blood he wanted and sought, even at the risk of his own.

On June 21, 1973, The Philadelphia Bulletin, the most important afternoon paper in his state, headlined "Scott Attack John Dean's Credibility" before Dean uttered a public word.

"Embezzlers can be liars," he pontificated about the man who had not embezzled and even the vengeance-seeking Nixonians did not dare charge in court. "There is nothing so incredible that a turncoat would not be willing to testify to in return for a reward."

With the creation of the Ervin committee, Scott, impelled by neither reason nor need broaden his attack on Dean to include that committee. Speaking at a Republican party function in Waukegan, Illinois July 14 (~~post-15~~) Dean became not the man who forced the truth out but ~~the~~ "this little rat!" <sup>Of</sup> ~~and~~ the Ervin committee, barely started on its work he said "The only evidence that these people [sic] are adducing is the statement of non-corroborated self-confessed felon 'honest' John Dean, a statement ~~that~~ which will not be corroborated by anyone else in my judgement..."

Thereafter almost all testimony, particularly that intended to refute it, confirmed Dean's. Without stopping Scott's campaign. It did make him worry for a while, particularly

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when Nixon's clandestine bugging became known and he refused to let the Senate have access to those tapes.

= Not to disgrace himself with the vote, ~~Scott~~ in the words of the Bulletin's headline of July 20, 1973, "Scott Urges Compromise On Use of Nixon Tapes."

With the other side of his mouth, "Scott told reporters the President has 'every right' to withhold information from Congress."

To both both positions Scott added a third later exploited by Nixon as an excuse for what was to become known as "The Saturday Night Massacre," his firing of his own special prosecutor: "He suggested that the President and the Watergate committee agree on a neutral person... to survey the tapes and papers."

By the end of November (~~Post-11/30/73~~) Scott admitted having "a terribly difficult job" as his party's leader and in holding onto public confidence that he was telling the Watergate truth. So, he said that Nixon owed the people "a complete all-out disclosure."

This a ter a year and a half in which Nixon had been saying he was disclosing all?

And after a year and a half, Nixon still owed "actual complete candor" and "an answer to all the charges."

Who but Nixon could survive so stalwart a defender and such a record?

Politicians know the electorate forgets. Scott, however, did not forget a fancied slight from Dean when Dean was White House counsel, when Dean had actually sought to protect one of Scott's assistants who had been promoted by Nixon from disclosure of a dubious record.

Scott opened 1974 with a renewed attack on Dean based on the claim to being privy to White House proof on the withheld tapes. Dean, Scott said, was a liar and this evidence would prove it. But by then the ~~MEMX~~ special prosecutor's office had the original evidence, as Scott did not, and took the unusual step of saying in court that it had no reason not to trust Dean on Dean's word and no reason to believe he had lied.

"Prosecutors Back Dean's Reliability," was the Post's headline. (~~2/1/74~~)

Again Scott used both sides of the one mouth. "If the rug is pulled out from under me I will have something to say later. I'll be damned if I'll be a patsy for anybody,"

he threatened ~~(1/30 KPM transcript)~~/ Then he snapped back at Dean, still a liar he wanted charged with perjury. ~~(Ap Post 2/2/74)~~ Scott sounded firm when he used words like "I believe" his earlier charges. "I am convinced...I am not backtracking one single inch."

For all his brave talk, The Washington Post's headline of February 2, 1974, "Scott Finds Self in Credibility Bind," told it as it was. If he had been "duped by the White House," reporter Spencer Rich's question, "I will not react mildly."

That was true.

When Nixon personally pulled the rug out for under Scott the next month Scott did not react at all. So, he didn't react "mildly," either.

What could he at that point do, condemn himself by condemning Nixon?

Or say "Nixon was cannibalizing everyone, not just his own personal White House staff?"