

So what Ehrlichman, formerly Nixon's second-most-trusted and his chief operator in multitudinous dirtyworks, actually did was float a rumor through friends that he was going to tell all and that he had come to see Nixon as something less than God's gift to the nation and to history. He then issued what was interpreted as a denial and a refutation but was considerably less. In fact, it denied nothing that was essential in the original leak from his friends. And in this studied avoidance was a clear message: if my throat is cut, others bleed with me.

And if Ehrlichman squealed, Nixon and everyone else was done in.

Nixon's immediate problem was to keep Ehrlichman quiet.

The only way to do this was to protect Ehrlichman.

The Jencks Act, never mentioned in those torrent of words about the disclosures of the excerpts from the tapes, is one of the legal means by which this could be accomplished.

This can best be understood by examining the Ehrlichman "plant" with the Los Angeles Times and his subsequent "denial" that was not a denial and Nixon's subsequent promise that was not once regarded as or described as a promise.