

Wallowing in Watergate

I read with interest Mr. Nixon's comment that he was going to get on with the important business of government and let others 'wallow in Watergate.' Mr. Nixon left us with the image of those still interested in Watergate—the press, the courts, the special prosecutor, the Ervin Committee, and last but not the least the American people—indulging themselves in Watergate like pigs rolling around a pen full of mud for their own hedonistic gratification.

However, the word 'wallow' has other definitions. When used as a noun it can be defined as 'a state of degradation or degeneracy.' This is an interpretation of the word that the Nixon administration should be familiar with. It has been guilty of criminal acts, grossly unethical conduct, and myriad activities that smack of police state tactics. In other words of activities that have helped to create an atmosphere of degeneracy and degradation in government. Those of us who have been critical of the President's role in the months since Watergate have not been wallowing in Watergate—rather Mr. Nixon's leadership has created a wallow (a state of degeneracy in government).

Mr. Nixon in his little speech upon leaving Bethesda Naval Hospital gave us no encouragement that he is going to attempt to deal with this state of de-

generacy either. He refuses to explain his own activities beyond unilateral statements that are self-serving and deny any sort of cross-examination; he refuses to provide any documentation that bears on Watergate, the cover-up, and kindred activities and justifies this by interpreting executive privilege in an incredibly arrogant and destructive manner; and now he apparently plans to counterattack with the familiar Nixon refrain—they are out to get Nixon. In other words nothing wrong has really occurred and the only problem is a group of conspirators who simply want Nixon's scalp.

The fact is that the American people and the institutions that are trying to discover what happened during the pre and post Watergate period are not wallowing—they are floundering. Floundering because of a President who does not seem to realize that in a state trying to maintain some semblance of democracy criminal acts, unethical acts, police state behavior on the part of government are intolerable. As long as the President continues to behave in this manner we must assume that he is covering-up for himself, or that he does not have the sensitivity to recognize that gross wrongdoing and damage to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights has occurred. In either case he continues to contribute to a state of degeneracy and degradation in our government—to a wallow—from which we may never recover unless the people, the Senate, the courts refuse to allow him to make a mockery of the truth.

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