

Dear Jim,

8/21/75

Your 8/17 with enclosures came today. Before working off some of the feeling that developed partly from the emotion generated by the chapter I wrote beginning 4 a.m. - the only way I can have undisturbed time - a few comments on your fascinating tracing of and theorizing about the bone of the Peking man. I've read the letter only, not the attached Times story, because as soon as I handle the rest of the day's mail that requires my attention I want to get back to writing so that I can finish it before Howard, who phoned last night, gets here next week. I do need someone to go over these things with an independent judgement of what is really necessary as a matter of available record, not for literary purposes.

I made a few marks on your letter as I read it to guide me in this hasty comment.

Nixon's unwillingness to discuss Watergate in his TV deal lasted only as long as a major net with a sophisticated news staff was in the bidding. It got them out while jacking the price up. He can handle Frost and Frost's money sources, so he can use this as part of his justification of himself.

In saying "no open part in campaigning" I think you touched on a point that is being missed. How about his not open political activity? Reduced as it is, Nixon still has a following. The 3M repairman who came here day before yesterday used to work in the Nixon White House. He is not for WG but he is still for Nixon. He represents those who should know better but would still follow a Nixon preference. Ford ought not be too happy about a situation in which his only possible following is reduced by a Wallace and endangered by a Nixon.

Ford as possible blackmailed into pardoning Nixon: Ziegler was on ABC's a.m. news (ugh) program yesterday. He was asked this and spent a long time not answering. Reynolds was considerate enough not to note the verbal stonewalling. The question was had there been a deal. Ziegler never answered.

Nixon is a man singularly without accomplishment. You and he are both right in regarding it as his triumph and you in noting that it was available to him only because he had denied it to any other president.

Taking his desire for the ambassadorship a step further, it can in his own mind add to his accomplishment after his debasements and make him feel like a real success and it can be what he and his would regard as total absolution.

He does have a need for attention. It is part of his need to feel that he really is somebody when deep down he knows he isn't. I agree what I think you are saying, that while he may not be running around making speeches his silence will be in public only and that he has let it be known that in private he will do as he sees fit.

In context this does become a kind of blackmail.

Your theorizing about the potential of using the bones in this is fascinating. There is nothing that could do the same as delivering them.

But time is breathing down his neck.

So may the courts be. (The suit on his tapes has missed what might be an important legal technicality, a special law on film.)

I'd like to believe that the federal judges are beginning to worry a little about their finking. That is what I was writing early this a.m. (Do you remember anyone really addressing this from the record?)

There is much I'd have liked to consider further on this fascinating bit.

But I have to keep up with the mail and I want to have all the text of the add done before Howard gets here so he can recommend cutting before he starts work on helping decide what priorities there are in the appendix and suggesting annotation.

If the Enquirer doesn't go for anything their good reporter took back I'm to get enough from it to pay Howard, who phoned in happiness that was mutual last night.

Best,

17 August 1975

HW:

These two clippings add up to a low-key affirmation of our developing suspicions about Nixon: there has been a fundamental change in his posture, possibly indicating a new bargain of some kind with Ford.

He is more cheerful and keeps busy, well enough to say he's 90 per cent new but not ~~well~~ too well to risk being subpoenaed to testify in a court. The big change in his dickering with Frost and others over TV rights is that he now says they can't be released before the 1976 election is over. At the same time he now is supposed to be willing to discuss Watergate.

To look back, last January he floated a couple of trial balloons as he was emerging from his illness: he would like to resume activity in GOP politics and also would like to be ambassador to China. We thought then and believe even more firmly now that his interest in GOP politics was a threat -- a threat he is tempering somewhat now by talk of discreet private calls to GOP leaders but with the implication that he will take no open part in campaigning until the 1976 election is over. But no definite commitment, so the threat may remain in the background.

Our feeling that the Peking Man relics are somehow involved in all this continues undiminished. You may recall that last spring and early this summer Christopher Janus got considerable publicity about the possibility of finding the bones in a cabin back of the Bendleton Marine Base. He even hired a helicopter and searched unsuccessfully for the cabin, then ostensibly abandoned the search. This gambit was accompanied by talk of how nice it would be for Ford to take the bones with him when he goes to Peking this fall. With no visible prospect of finding the bones in time, Ford presumably will have to go to Peking without them.

What has this got to do with Nixon's posture? Well, suppose that during ~~his~~ his presidency Nixon managed to get hold of the bones and salt them away somewhere for use later, such as when he returned to Peking some day to re-establish full relations. Suppose that somehow he still has control of them in some way. Note that he has telephoned Ford at least five times to the one time Ford phoned him on his birthday. Note also that he has talked with Kissinger even more by phone. None of this necessarily means anything, but there is the possibility that if Nixon still controls the bones (and Kissinger has to be in on it somehow) he very well could have vetoed the idea that Ford would take the newly discovered bones to Peking this fall, with the result that Janus had to call off his search rather suddenly.

What ~~is~~ if Nixon still wants to be ambassador to Peking, and plans ~~to~~ not only to take the bones with him but use them in the meantime as a lever to get the appointment? That's stretching things, but so was vetoing any rapprochement with China for 25 years until he could pull it off himself. As for Ford, the probability is still high that if he could bring himself ~~to~~ or be blackmailed into pardoning Nixon, there is no reason ~~to~~ suppose he couldn't be pressured into naming him ambassador to Peking. As I've pointed out earlier, there are reasons to think the Chinese would not be unwilling to accept him, depending on other aspects of the bargain, mainly the Taiwan situation.

The bones remain to be found, of course, and it always is possible that they may be found in time for Ford to take them this fall. In which case he may have paid what Nixon's price was to turn loose of them, assuming Nixon has control of them.

Nixon has a thing about China, regarding it as his greatest triumph, so his desire to be ambassador fits in perfectly. It is clear that while he has softened his threat about mixing in with GOP politics, he has no intention of ~~saying~~ quietly at San Clemente after the 1986 election is over and his memoirs are finished and his version of Watergate not only published ~~and~~ but aired on TV. Already he is talking of travelling abroad. To think this is not serious, and not taken seriously by both Republicans and Democrats, is to rely on a totally unjustified euphoria. His nature is such that he cannot stay quiet in private but must be in the public eye, soaking up the attention he must have. China is his best chance for such attention, he thinks, and he has a time constraint in the age of Mao and Chou. Delivered to even another olster like Teng Shao-p'ing, the bones could make much less of a splash, and none at all if turned over to some of the younger party leaders who are working their way up through the heirarchy.

We have clips on all items that have appeared bearing on this possible connection, and I've tried to keep Larry Finley up to date on the Peking Man angle with the idea that he might run into something revealing about Janus.

This brings the situation up to date, I believe, in a general way. The persistent reappearance of the Peking Man story in the news during the past three years is too consistent to be ignored. It has to mean something, and it could be part of a developing bargain between Ford and Nixon with Kissinger functioning as a point of contact if nothing else.

Best,



jdw

After a Year in Exile, Nixon Is Taking An Active Interest in the Politics of '76

By EVERETT R. HOLLES

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Aug. 8 — A year after the scandals of Watergate drove him to resign the Presidency, Richard M. Nixon is emerging from the trauma of that ordeal and, according to associates, is taking an active interest in Republican party politics.

The exile of San Clemente was said by several friends who see him frequently to be spending hours on the telephone "talking 1976 politics" with persons of influence in Republican affairs, urging upon them the necessity of keeping the party united behind President Ford's election.

"He is deeply concerned about the challenges from the right to Mr. Ford's leadership," said one friend, "especially efforts by Ronald Reagan and a few others to mobilize Republican conservatives, even though He is confident those opponents cannot possibly succeed in casting the President aside.

"He feels strongly, nevertheless, that any right-wing revolt centering largely upon foreign policies which President Ford inherited from him, and has generally kept intact, would not only be a gift to the Democrats but would turn the party back toward obsolete and dangerous isolationism with serious consequences for the nation and the cause of world peace."

In what the friends described as Mr. Nixon's "discreet" advice to Republican leaders around the country, he was said to have urged that firm steps be taken—in just what manner was not made clear—to curb the growing conservative criticism of his successor.

Talks with Ford

Among those to whom Mr. Nixon is reported to have stressed his concern are members of Congress and the Ford Administration, and some of the Republican party's most generous financial supporters.

At least one of his telephone calls, according to a Nixon confidant, went to Howard H. Callaway, whom he appointed Secretary of the Army and who is now Mr. Ford's 1976 campaign manager. Other calls went to such party leaders in Congress as Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and John J. Rhodes of Arizona.

Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona who has visited the Nixons' Casa Pacifica and discussed Mr. Nixon's political future with him, has since received several telephone calls, as have Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and California's Republican state chairman Paul Haerle, according to sources close to events at the Nixon home.

A San Clemente friend said that Mr. Nixon had talked with President Ford at least six times recently about "political and other matters," although Mr. Ford has initiated only one call to his predecessor—on his 62d birthday last Jan. 9.

More frequent and more political have been Mr. Nixon's calls to Secretary of State Kissinger.

Mr. Nixon also was said to be concerned over criticism of President Ford's recent trip to the European Security Conference in Helsinki, Finland, which in the former President's view, was an essential sequel to his own policy of detent with the Soviet Union.

Rejuvenated and Impatient

The former President, who resigned Aug. 9, 1944, was described this week by a member of his stripped-down staff as "rejuvenated and impatient man," if not yet fully recovered from last November's blood clot surgery.

The staff member described the former President as feeling that after 12 months, "the emotionalism is fast draining out of Watergate," giving way to new concerns over the economy, the energy crisis and other issues.

He was said to feel that public rancor toward him had given way to a more temperate attitude, and that the American people were coming more and more to look upon him as a man who may have made serious errors of judgment but who did his best in the national interest.

Others, however, who have talked to Mr. Nixon recently feel that while he is less given to brooding, he still is "out of touch with reality."

The renewal of Mr. Nixon's spirits and confidence, and his talk about embarking on a new career of public service as well as an "exploratory" trip to Europe, possibly next year, appear to be based partly on nearly two million letters he has received in the last year,

95 per cent of which were said to carry messages of "sympathy, respect, and gratitude."

'Remarkably Improved'

Seven months ago, a group of about 40 friends and associates arranged a birthday party for him at the San Clemente Inn. Several of those who attended later referred to the former President as "a beaten man."

Now, he is making a steady recovery in body and spirit, according to his friend and neighbor, Paul Presley, although his illness has left its marks—a slight stoop, more gray hair, the trace of a frown above his sunken cheeks and more flaccid jowels.

"But he is remarkably improved, more cheerful and more alert and his limp is rarely noticeable," Mr. Presley said.

Because of a bland, low-cholesterol diet, his weight is down from a normal 164 pounds to about 155 pounds.

Sitting with a visitor around his swimming pool two weeks ago, Mr. Nixon said:

"I'm 90 per cent as good as new now."

He plays golf once or twice a week, sleeps soundly, and works five or six hours a day, mostly on his memoirs.

Like the former White House compound on the adjoining grounds of the Coast Guard Loran Station, where many of the modular structures of the Presidential complex have disappeared and the helicopter pad has become a handball court, Casa Pacifica has lost its trim, manicured appearance.

With only one gardener left from a staff of five, portions of the lawn are yellowed and spiked with weeds.

Until the resignation, the Nixons were surrounded by a staff and service personnel totaling 26 persons. Today there are nine.

Neither Mr. or Mrs. Nixon is ever seen on El Camino Real, the main shopping street in this coastal resort city of 30,000 and, except for Mr. Presley, who owns the San Clemente Inn and lives a stone's throw away from the Nixons, they have no close friends in the town.

David Frost Signs To Interview Nixon; Sum Is Undisclosed

NYTimes AUG 1 1975

Special to The New York Times

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Aug. 10—David Frost, the television personality, announced today that he had bought the exclusive rights to the "television memoirs" of Richard M. Nixon.

Mr. Frost said he and the former President signed a 13-page contract yesterday evening, exactly one year after Mr. Nixon resigned the Presidency.

Mr. Frost said there would be four 90-minute programs, which will be filmed immediately but will not be broadcast until after the elections of November, 1976.

He refused to disclose the amount of money Mr. Nixon would receive for the interviews, which will be filmed at the former President's estate in San Clemente, or when and on which stations the interviews would be televised.

"I should make it clear that the former President has neither requested nor has he received any editorial control—whether in terms of the content

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or editing of the programs, the use of newsreel footage, or by way of prior knowledge of any of the questions," Mr. Frost said. "No subject, including Watergate, has been barred."

The rights to the interviews were acquired by Mr. Frost on behalf of what he called an "international consortium of broadcasting organizations." Mr. Frost refused to identify any of the organizations.

Irving Lazar, a literary agent who has been representing Mr. Nixon, had proposed to the television networks last month that they buy the rights to a series of interviews with the former President.

CBS News and ABC News rejected the proposals on the ground that their company policies did not permit them to buy news exclusives.

NBC News, however, did negotiate with Mr. Lazar on the premise that the interviews would be based on Mr. Nixon's written memoirs when they are completed.

Richard C. Wald, president of the news division, denied industry reports that the asking price for the television

interviews was as high as \$1-million.

Mr. Frost said he spent some time with Mr. Nixon yesterday and he found the former President "physically well."

"He led us on a strenuous tour of the house so we could get an idea of filming locations, and I was astonished how vigorous he looked. It was a total contradiction of the ailing man I had pictured," he said.

Watergate Discussions

Mr. Frost said Mr. Nixon had seemed "totally in touch with reality" during his conversations with him. He made the comment in response to a reporter's question concerning suggestions of various commentators about the former President's state of mind.

At least one-quarter of the interviews would be devoted to discussions of the Watergate affair, Mr. Frost said. Asked whether Mr. Nixon might be less than candid in discussing the scandal, Mr. Frost said: "I sense that he's ready to start reflecting on his life and his achievements. I have no reason to believe the ex-President will be less than candid."

Mr. Frost said he planned to begin filming immediately and intended to film 20 separate interviews from which the four programs would be cut. However, he said he did not know what would become of the parts of the films that remained unused.

Mr. Frost said that he believed a "major network" would be involved in broadcasting the interviews in this country but said he could not identify any networks until agreements had been signed.

In a press release handed to reporters at a hastily called news conference here, Mr. Lazar was quoted as saying, "From among the many people wanting to interview the former President, Mr. Nixon chose David Frost because of Mr. Frost's unique and wide-ranging experience."

Mr. Frost, in answer to a question, said he did not regard the paid interviews as "check-book journalism," mainly because Mr. Nixon is no longer in office.

"Each person still owns the rights to his own life after retirement," Mr. Frost said. The reason public broadcast of the four interviews will be delayed until late 1976 is that "the

former President does not wish to intervene in the political debate of the next elections," Mr. Frost said.

Mr. Frost, the 36-year-old son of a Methodist minister in Kent, England, burst onto the American television scene in 1963 with an Americanized version of "That Was the Week That Was," a weekly satirical review that had made Mr. Frost a major star in England.

"TW-3," as the irreverent show became known, lasted two years, but Mr. Frost was back in 1969 shuttling, often more than once a week, between London and New York, where he taped a syndicated 90-minute nightly talk show that made him almost as famous as Johnny Carson.

Since 1972, when the David Frost Show was canceled, Mr. Frost's interests have included stints as a BBC interviewer.

Interest here in Mr. Frost has centered on the celebrity status of his well-publicized romances, first with Diahann Carroll, the actress and singer, who broke the engagement and married someone else. Last year, the scenario was repeated when Karen Graham, a Vogue cover girl, married a Las Vegas hotel operator.